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Great Britain and the Irish Treaty of 1921

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GREAT BRITAIN AND THE IRISH TREATY OF 1921

by

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LIFE

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DEDICATION

To my Mother, without whose inspiration, advice, encouragement, and patience, Great Britain and the Irish Treaty of 1921 could never have been written.

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CHAPTER I

THE IRISH QUESTION AND ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE IT BEFORE 1921

Although some writers of Irish history would trace the struggle for Irish independence back to a time shortly after the conquest of Ireland by England in 1172, the separation movement which culminated in the Irish political leaders obtaining dominion status by the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921, appears to have a more tangible beginning in two rebellions at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[1] Both of these revolts, one breaking out in 1798 and the other five years later, were organized by a young Protestant from the northeastern part of Ireland -- Wolfe Tone[2] in the first instance; Robert Emmet[3] in the second-- whose political ideal was a republic. Both were brutally suppressed, and the Act of Union in 1801 set up a legislative union between England and Ireland, but the tradition of physical resistance in Ireland was never lost.

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1 William Hamilton Maxwell, History of the Irish Rebellion in 1798; with Memoirs of the Union and Emmet's Insurrection in 1803, London, 1887; F. Bourke, The Rebellion of 1803, an Essay in Bibliography, Dublin, 1933

2 Theobald Wolfe Tone, Autobiography of Wolfe Tone edited by Sean O'Faolain, Dublin, 1937; Frank MacDermott, Theobald Wolfe Tone, London, 1939.

3 Stephen Gwynn, Robert Emmet, a Historical Romance

In 1848, Smith O'Brien and the Young Irelanders launched a futile insurrection[4] and nine years later the Irish Republican Brotherhood or Feinians were formed, dedicated to securing total independence for Ireland and pledged to supplying men and money for espionage against the British Empire in all parts of the world.[5] Feinian strength varied during the next half century, but revived considerably after 1910 and all the organizers of the 1916 Rebellion, the last rebellion, were Feinians.[6]

In 1879, the Land League was founded by Michael Davitt to improve the financial condition of Irishmen through the weapons of boycott and no-rent campaigns.[7] The Land League succeeded in alerting the British Government to conditions in Ireland resulting in the passage of several land relief acts by Parliament and the inauguration of a temporary policy of appeasement on the part of the British Government.

London, 1909; Helen Landreth, The Pursuit of Robert Emmet, London, 1931; Raymond Postgate, Robert Emmet, London, 1931.

4 Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, Young Ireland, New York, 1881; and Four Years of Irish History, 1845-1849, New York, 1883; (His son was one of the Irish delegates to the London Conference in 1921) Denis Gwynn, Young Ireland and 1848, Oxford, 1949.

5 John O'Leary, Recollections of a Feinian and Feinianism, London, 1896; John Devoy, Recollections of an Irish Rebel; the Feinian Movement, New York, 1929.

6 Desmond Ryan, The Rising, Dublin, 1949,11.

7 Norman Dunbar Palmer, The Land League Crisis, New Haven, 1940; Michael Davitt; The Fall of Feudalism, London and New York, 1904.

Other Irish leaders held up home rule or a limited control over certain local affairs by an Irish legislature as their political ideal and they insisted that this arrangement must come about by constitutional means. In 1829, the Catholic Emancipation Act, won chiefly through extra-Parliamentary agitation, opened the way for pressure within Commons.[8] As the Parliamentary franchise was broadened to include by 1885, agricultural workers, the constituents of the Irish members became a numerous, similarly-thinking group. The next parliamentary leader who appeared on the Irish scene, Charles Stewart Parnell, had behind him a solid mass of eighty-five Irish votes. Moreover, when this political dictator and friend of the Feinians was elected President of the Irish Land League in 1880, he temporarily united the three nationalist movements of the nineteenth century -- parliamentary agitation, Feinianism and land reform. His death and disgrace a few years later together with a new British policy of appeasement quelled the flames of Irish nationalism for the next twenty years.

Mary Frances Cusack,

8 The Liberator, His Life and Times, Kenmare, 1872; Robert Dunlap, Daniel O'Connell and the Revival of National Life, New York, 1900: Edward Augustus Kendall, Letters to a Friend on the State of Ireland: the Roman Catholic Question, London, 1826; Three Months in Ireland. By an English Protestant., London, 1827 (Extracts from evidence before the London Committee in 1825, ordered to be printed July 4, 1825).

9 Thomas Power O'Connor, The Parnell Movement, London, 1887; Great Britain, Special Commission to Inquire into Charges and Allegations against Certain Members of Parliament and Others, Parnellism and Crime, the Special Commission, reprinted from the London Times, London, 1888-1890.

The first British offer of home rule for Ireland came in 1886 when William Gladstone introduced the first Home Rule Bill into Parliament, and saw its defeat on the second reading in the House of Commons by a combined Conservative-Liberal majority of three hundred forty-three to three hundred and thirteen.[10] A second Home Rule Bill was passed by the House of Commons in 1893 but for the first time the House of Lords used its privilege of reversing a Home Rule decision by Commons.[11] The Lords were determined to resist any concession to Ireland and a way had to be cleared for the passage of a third Home Rule Bill by the Parliament Act. This measure, carried after a fierce debate and under the menace of wholesale creation of new peerages, provided that a Bill passed by Commons in three consecutive sessions would automatically become law regardless of the attitude of the House of Lords. When it became law at the time a Liberal Government, pledged to Home Rule was in power, and the Irish Parliamentary Party held the balance of power in the House of Commons, the Irish people began to regard Home Rule as a certainty.[12]

A new Home Rule measure, the Government of Ireland Bill, was introduced in Commons on April 11, 1912 by Prime Minister Asquith in a speech in which he deplored his inferiority to the great Ulysses of the Gladstonian epic.[13] The bill provided

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10 "The Articles of Agreement", Manchester Guardian, December 10, 1921, 12.

11 Ibid.

12 Denis Gwynn, The History of Partition 1912-1926, Dublin, 1950, 37-38.

13 Parliamentary Debates, fifth series, Commons XXXVI, (April 11, 1912), 1399.

for the establishment of a special Irish Parliament at Dublin[14] which would be subordinate to the British Parliament in financial and military matters. Under its provisions, the English Parliament would have the right to alter any law passed by the Dublin Parliament, but no act of the British Parliament could be altered by Dublin even if it would still be collected by British officials and paid into the British exchequer. Ireland could have no territorial force and no consular service; it could make no trade treaties.[15]

Limited though it was, the Home Rule Bill won the favor of Irishmen in most parts of the country who rallied round Mr. John Redmond, leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party at Westminster, who had always insisted that the only means which would improve the political conditions of Ireland would be constitutional ones.[16] However, in the Northeast of Ireland, the Ulster Unionists were determined to prevent Home Rule from becoming law in Ireland.

To mollify the wrath of Ulster, two young Members of Parliament from the Liberal camp proposed an amendment

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14 Like previous proposals for establishing a separate administration in Ireland, the Home Rule bill contained no provisions to exclude any part of the province of Ulster from the scheme of the administration cf Sir Arthur Queckett, Official Handbook to the Constitution of Northern Ireland, Belfast, 1928, 21.

15 Debates, Commons XXXVI, (April 11, 1912) 1405-1422.

excluding from the operation of the Bill the four counties of Armagh, Antrim, Down and Derry which contained Protestant and Unionist majorities.[17] The amendment failed to satisfy the Ulster Unionists, but their leader, Sir Edward Carson,[18] supported it because he felt that it would make the Home Rule Bill unworkable.[19] Speaking for the Government, Lloyd George revealed that the Cabinet had fully considered the possibility of excluding Ulster from the operation of Home Rule, but had found it impossible to draw any clear dividing line without excluding areas and counties which had consistently supported demands for Home Rule.[20]

The Ulster leaders backed up their protests by frequent, open and provocative incitements to mutiny in the British Army, raising their own army of sixty thousand Ulster Volunteers,[21] well-trained and well-equipped with illegally imported weapons[22] and launching a series of monster meetings throughout the province of Ulster as a prelude to Ulster Day, September 28, 1912, on which all Protestants in Ulster signed a pledge called the Solemn League and Covenant to stand by each other in defending

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16 Frank Lee Benns, Irish Question 1912-1914, New York, 1928.

17 Gwynn, History of Partition, 46.

18 Leader of the Ulster Unionist party who became Attorney-General of Great Britain.

19 Gwynn, History of Partition, 42.

20 Ibid, 43.

21 Ibid, 47-49.

22 Maurice Joy, editor, The Irish Rebellion of

for themselves and their children their cherished position of equal citizenship in the British Empire and of using any necessary means to defeat the "conspiracy" to set up a Home Rule Parliament in Ireland.[23] A Provisional Government was even set up to take over in Ulster in the event Home Rule became law. The Unionists believed that no British Government would dare use their troops against Ulstermen resisting Home Rule by force. Such a Government would run a greater risk of being lynched in London than the Loyalists of Ulster would run of being shot in Belfast.[24] It was impossible, however, to prosecute men like Bonar Law, the leader of His Majesty's Most Loyal Opposition, who was making "the most inflammatory speeches, not excepting Sir Edward Carson's", that were made on the Unionist side.[25]

For nearly twelve months, the fight went on, now in one House, now the other. The Bill was thrown out by the Lords on the second reading, three hundred and twenty-six to sixty-nine, early in 1913[26], but in the same year the Bill was once

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1916 and Its Martyrs, New York, 1916,5960.

23 Gwynn, History of Partition, 50.

24 Ibid, 44.

25 Herbert, Lord of Oxford and Asquith, Memories and Reflections 1852-1927, London, 1928, I, 240.

26 Debates

more passed through all of its stages in Commons, only to be thrown out on the second reading by the Peers.[27] Mysterious "conversations between leaders" were held during the recess of 1913-1914, to which guarded reference was made in the King's Speech at the opening of the 1914 session.[28] Nothing was supposed to have come of these conversations which culminated in the Buckingham Palace Conference in July, 1914, summoned by the King and attended by Prime Minister Asquith and Lloyd George representing the Government; Unionist party leaders, Lord Landsdowne, former Undersecretary at the Foreign Office and Bonar Law; John Redmond and John Dillon representing the Irish Parliamentary Party and the Ulster Unionists, Sir Edward Carson and Captain Craig;[29] but presently the Government promised that an Amending Bill with the object of giving Ulster a contracting-out option under certain conditions would be passed concurrently with the final stage of the Home Rule Bill.[30]

The Lords transformed the Amending Bill into a Bill for the repeal of the Home Rule Bill itself and then allowed it to drop quietly at the opening of the World War in August, 1914. In its place, a Suspensory Bill was affixed which provided that

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27 Debates,

28 Ibid., Commons LVIII, (February 10, 1914), 51.

29 In 1921, he was Sir James Craig, Prime Minister of Ulster.

30 Gwynn, History of Partition, 115-130.

the Home Rule Act must not come into operation until a year after the conclusion of the war.[31] Home Rule became law in September when it was passed in a third consecutive session of Commons, and the Unionists walked out of the House in protest.[32]

Meanwhile, in southern Ireland, serious apprehensions arose lest Ulster's preparations for resistance by force overthrow the Liberal Government and as a result the Home Rule Bill might never become operative. Following the example set by a score of young men in Dublin, half of whom were members of the secret Irish Republican Brotherhood or Fenians, in November, 1913, organized the Irish Volunteers, a parallel organization. The Irish Volunteers intended "to secure and maintain the rights and liberties common to all the people of Ireland."[33]

The Irish Volunteers immediately began a program of army drill and arms importation into Ireland,[34] and sent Sir

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31 Parliamentary Debates, Commons LXVI, (September 15, 1914), 1920, 382.

32 Gwynn, History of Partition, 143.

33 The O'Rahilly, "Secret History of the Irish Volunteers", Dublin, 1915.

34 Pierce Beasley, "How the Fight Began", Irish Independent in January, 1-31, 1953.

Roger Casement,[35] a retired member of the British Consular Service and recent convert to nationalism, to the United States seeking money[36] and to Germany seeking munitions[37] for the insurrection they were to launch sometime during the war. After the Volunteers formed an alliance with the Citizen Army[38] a labor defense force which had been organized by James Conolly[39] during the Transport and General Workers strike in 1913, final plans were laid for a rebellion which was to start on Easter Sunday, 1916.[40]

While Irish Parliamentary Party leader, John Redmond, supported the Volunteers, their paper strength exceeded one hundred thousand.[41] Quarrels arose over leadership of the Volunteers, the use of funds and the question of Irishmen to volunteer for service in the British Army, (Redmond felt that if Ireland showed her loyalty during the war, Great Britain would have to grant her Home Rule at its conclusion) and Redmond and his followers withdrew, leaving a group greatly reduced in

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35 Maurice Joy, Irish Rebellion, 310-315

36 Desmond Ryan, The Phoenix Flame, London, 1937, 293-300.

37 George Knott, editor, Trial of Sir Roger Casement, London, 1917.

38 James Brennan, "James Conolly", Dublin's Fighting Story, Tralee, 1947, 86-90. See also Richard Michael Fox, History of the Irish Citizen Army, Dublin, 1944.

39 Entirely self-educated, Conolly became interested in the Socialist movement to better the condition of the workingman, and became a lecturer for the Socialists. Reading had made him an expert military tactician, too.

40 Ryan, Rising, 47-55.
"Manifesto to the Irish Volunteers", IV September

41 Irish Review, November, 1914, 281.

numbers and greatly divided in political sentiment. The majority of the Volunteer officers, including the Commandant, Owen MacNeill, thought of their organization strictly as a defensive force. Only a small radical minority favored launching a rebellion, and their leaders kept plans for the Easter Rising secret until three days before the scheduled starting date.[42]

While this secrecy kept Britain ignorant of Rising plans, it resulted in confusion in Volunteer ranks throughout the rural parts of Ireland and a lack of unity as to the purpose of the rebellion -- to insure a grant of Home Rule to Ireland, or to secure full independence. A last minute order countermanded by Commandant MacNeill caused the Rising to start a day late;[43] but on Easter Monday about a thousand men in Dublin assembled for a parade and proceeded to occupy the principal buildings of the city in the name of the Provisional Government of the Irish Republic.[44] From the steps of the General Post Office building, Patrick Pearse as temporary President of the Republic read a proclamation declaring the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership and unfettered control of Irish destinies; to be sovereign and indefeasible. The Irish Republic

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42 Ryan, The Rising, 89-90.

43 Beasley, Irish Independent.

44 Ibid.

was a Sovereign, Independent State, continued the document. Pearse and six other self-appointed officials of the Irish Republic pledged their lives and the lives of their comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare and of its exaltation among the nations.[45]

Fighting began immediately and the British Government in Ireland caught off guard lay helpless as a thousand green-uniformed men of the Irish Republican Army took over a good part of the city of Dublin. British reinforcements were quickly dispatched for Dublin from Belfast, the Curragh, Templemore and Athlone in northeastern Ireland, and from the west of England.[46]

On Tuesday, the artillery was brought into play, and an encircling movement was begun in from the suburbs of Dublin towards the city center where republican headquarters were. On Wednesday, fire from the gunboat, Helga, on the River Liffey demolished Liberty Hall, headquarters of the Citizen Army, wrecked the upper story of the Post Office where the Provisional Government had set up its headquarters and set buildings along O'Connell Street, the main thoroughfare of the city, crashing to the ground. From that time on, it was just a matter of time until the British forces would have control of all the important

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45 Edmund Curtis and R. B. MacDowell, editors, Irish Historical Documents 1172-1922, London, 1953.

46 Ryan, The Rising, 156-192.

posts in Dublin. On Saturday, President Pearse accepted the British terms for unconditional surrender and wrote a surrender order to be delivered to Republican commandants in Dublin and in the provinces.[47]

Except for districts in Kerry, Wexford, Galsay Cork and Dublin, the rebellion was never carried over into the countryside to win the support of the people throughout Ireland. In the country districts there was confusion over the starting time of the rebellion, failure to land arms sent from Germany, a scarcity of armament, uncertain communications and very limited training for Volunteers. All connived against those districts supporting the Dublin revolt; without support from the whole country, the Dublin action was hopeless.[48]

At the conclusion of the fighting, the Dublin leaders were looked upon as fanatics; and as traitors by a few. John Redmond wired his apologies to the Crown for the occurences and hoped that the Rising would not prevent Ireland from obtaining Home Rule at the end of the War.[49]

The Rising would indeed have failed had it not been

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47 Ibid.

48 Ibid, 218-228.

49 John Redmond, "The Voice of Ireland", London, 1916,1-2

for the British treatment of men captured during the week of fighting. Within two weeks, fifteen men were tried at secret courts martial and executed. One, James Conolly, was still so weak from his wounds that he had to be carried onto the prison field and propped up in a chair before the firing squad. Reports of such executions aroused heated criticism throughout the world. In England, the Manchester Guardian maintained that the executions were becoming an atrocity;[50] in Chicago, the newspapers ran a special issue for each of the men executed. In all parts of Ireland men suspected of having the faintest Republican sympathies were arrested and interned without a trial, thirty or forty to a room, at Kilmainham Prison or Richmond Barracks in Dublin along side of veterans of that city's week of fighting. If a man was not a Republican before he was sent to Kilmainham or Richmond, he was before he left. Their persecution changed the attitude of their fellow countrymen towards them and instead of fanatics, they were regarded as martyrs and heroes and as vacancies arose in Parliament these men in prisons and internment camps were elected to fill them.[51]

On May 11, 1916, Prime Minister Herbert Asquith

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50 Manchester Guardian, May 15, 1916.

51 Dorothy MacArdle, The Irish Republic, Dublin, 1950, 185-190.

journeyed to Dublin and Belfast and on his return he asked Lloyd George, then Minister of Munitions in the War Cabinet, to negotiate a settlement of the Irish Question.[52] Lloyd George told William O'Brien, a Redmondite member of Parliament, in a meeting with Sir Edwin Carson and him at Metropole, he personally felt that in six months the war would be lost as the Irish-American vote would go over to the German side, causing a break of the British blockade and an ignominious peace, unless something were done, even provisionally, to satisfy America.[53] In his negotiations he relied on personal conversations with leaders of all sections of Irish opinion, rather than a conference. He felt that if a conference were to break down, it would be difficult if not impossible to re-establish it.[54]

Lloyd George, himself, was a Federalist and in favor of separate legislatures for England, Scotland and Wales as well as for Ireland. He was against making concessions to Ireland which could not be made to the other parts of the United Kingdom. He believed that his native Wales had as much a claim to independence as Ireland, but that it would be madness for her to press such a claim since she would harm not only herself, but England and the whole British Empire as well.[55]

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52 Thomas Jones, Lloyd George, Cambridge, 1951, 70. Jones, a fellow-Welshman, was Lloyd George's personal friend and political confidant. He was one of the British secretaries at the Irish Conference in 1921.

53 William O'Brien, The Irish Revolution and How It Came About, London, 1923, 273.

54 Lord Riddell's War Diary, May 15, 1916, London, 1933, 241

55 Manchester Guardian, September 29, 1921, 9. Four discussions of the speech, Cf. infra, 59

The key to the Irish policy of Lloyd George lay not in "Home Rule All Around" but in his belief that the Protestant minority in Ulster should not be coerced and put under Nationalist rule since they were a people as alien in religious faith and traditions, alien in blood from the rest of Ireland as were the inhabitants of Fife or Aberdeen. To put them under Nationalist rule against their will would be "as glaring an outrage on the principles of liberty and self-government as the denial of self-government to the rest of Ireland."[56]

Lloyd George interviewed John Redmond, the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party and Sir Edward Carson, head of the Ulster Unionists and submitted to them a document called "Headings of an Agreement" to which they reluctantly gave their consent and got the consent of their followers. The Cabinet had requested Lloyd George to seek a solution of the Irish Question, but had not defined its nature or limitations.[57] When agreement had been reached with the Irish leaders, a fundamental difficulty appeared. Redmond was telling southern Irish leaders that the exclusion of Ulster from the Home Rule administration was to be temporary. Carson was certain that

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56 Debates, Commons XCI, (March 7, 1917).

57 Jones, Lloyd George, 81.

it was permanent[58] and he had a written statement from Lloyd George that at the end of the Provisional period "Ulster does not merge with the rest of Ireland whether she wills it or not."[59]

In face of growing opposition from both sides, the British Government abandoned Lloyd George's scheme, and agreed to postpone the question of partition "indefinitely."[60] However, negotiations spread over a two month period had convinced America that a genuine effort at settlement was being made.[61] It was two years before the British Government made the next move towards peace, the Irish Convention.

Meanwhile, the political party that was consistently winning by-elections in Ireland, Sinn Fein, was attracting to its ranks men representing all degrees of nationalism, and was fast taking the place of the Irish Parliamentary Party. The Sinn Fein, whose literal translation is "We Ourselves", was started in 1905 to secure national betterment of Ireland through the recognition of already existing rights and duties on the part of Irish individuals and through the cooperation of all

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58 Ibid.

59 Referred to by Lord Edward Carson in a speech in the House of Lords, December 14, 1921.

60 Debates, Commons XXII, (July 11, 1916), 611, 614.

61 Jones, Lloyd George, 83.

nationalist movements within Ireland.[62]

The aim of Arthur Griffith,[63] chief spokesman of Sinn Fein in its early days, was a restoration of the constitution granted Ireland in 1783, whereby Ireland and the Houses of Commons and Lords of Ireland alone could make laws for Ireland.[64] This could be achieved by withdrawing the Irish Members from Westminster and setting up a Provisional Government; by striving to govern Ireland by general delegation from rural councils already in existence and by resorting to the Arbitration Courts in existence instead of British law courts; and by developing a balanced program of agricultural cooperation with new native industries.[65]

During the Home Rule controversy, the aims and program of Sinn Fein was overlooked except for its plan of national education. Here a national system of primary education independent of the schools of British Board of Education was planned; a bilingual secondary school program with a core of Gaelic language and literature was tried successfully at the private boarding school directed by Padric Pearse and a National University was founded. Owen MacNeill, nominal head of the

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62 Francis Jones, History of the Sinn Fein Movement and the Irish Rebellion of 1916, New York, 1920, 1-10.

63 Head of the Irish delegation in London in 1921. Cf. infra,

64 Arthur Griffith, "The Resurrection of Hungary", United Irishman, undated.

65 Jones, History of Sinn Fein, 12-50.

Irish Volunteers, was a professor there and many of the leaders of the Easter Rising studied there at one time or another.[66]

After the Easter Rising, Sinn Fein concentrated on political action. It stood for an independent republic but promised that once this were attained, the people would be given a chance to declare by plebiscite what form of government they wished.[67] So popular did Sinn Fein become that in Great Britain its name came to represent all phases of Irish nationalism.[68] Carrying on in the spirit of its motto, "We Ourselves", Sinn Fein declined to cooperate in the next British move towards peace, the Irish Convention.

The Convention was called in response to the urgings of Cecil Spring-Rice, the British Ambassador in Washington and Walter Hines Page, the American Ambassador in London, that a settlement to the Irish difficulties be arrived at.[69] The meeting of one hundred and one delegates hand-picked by the Government met in Trinity College, Dublin, from July 25, 1917 to April 5, 1918, but their organizations were so divided in opinion that practically nothing was accomplished. Once Lord Midleton almost

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66 Ibid, 3-11.

67 MacArdle, Irish Republic, 200.

68 Sinn Fein in its early days bragged that it was peaceful and that its proposals did not violate one clause of English law, and it denounced the use of force as an instrument of policy. British papers, however, always referred to the Easter Rising as the Sinn Fein Rebellion, when actually it was a Rebellion of the Irish Volunteers and Citizen Army. After the Rising had failed, the Sinn Fein Organization continued its political program aimed at securing self government for Ireland without violence and bloodshed. However, since its name translated meant "We Ourselves", "Sinn Fein" was the term applied by the British journals to all Irish separatist groups, some of whom, like the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood, advocated force as an instrument of policy.

69 Tom Jones, Lloyd George, 187.

united the Nationalists, the Southern Unionists and the Labor delegates with a compromise on the fiscal question and an agreed constitution, but he and John Redmond were thwarted in their plan by the Ulster Unionists along with a few Catholic bishops.[70]

The Convention having held fifty-one meetings, reported finally on April fifth. Only forty-four members, less than half of the Convention, signed the main report. It proposed a form of Home Rule in which the Irish Parliament would have no power over matters affecting the Crown, peace and war, Army and Navy and various other services, and no control during the war of postal services or police, and no control until the United Kingdom should grant it, over Customs and Excise. Forty per cent of the representation in the Irish Lower House was to be given to Unionists. A Minority Report recommended a scheme which it described as "Dominion Home Rule", but which fell far short of the measure of autonomy which the British Dominions possessed; the Minority also, offered to suspend the settlement of Customs and Excise until after the war.[71]

In November, 1918, fighting on an abstentationist (If elected Members of Parliament, they would abstain from participation in the British Government at Westminster) and republican ticket, Sinn Fein candidates captured nearly every Irish constituency in the General Election. These duly elected representatives adopted the original Sinn Fein idea of abstain-

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70 Ibid., 184.

71 Report of the Proceedings of the Irish Convention, Dublin, 1918.

ing from Westminster and setting up their own Provisional Government. They met in Dublin in December and constituted themselves the Dail or Parliament. They chose an Executive Council headed by Eamon De Valera, the sole surviving Republican Commandant of the Easter Week campaign in Dublin, and began systematically to supplant the British Government in Ireland with a de facto government of their own.[72]

On January 21, 1919, the Dail issued to the nations of the world a Declaration of Irish Independence, printed in English, Gaelic and French. Dr. Patrick MacCartan, who had been secretly in this country as Minister of External Affairs for the de facto government of Ireland, began working with Irish-American groups to secure the aid of the United States Government in obtaining a hearing for Ireland at the Paris peace conference.[73]

The United States House of Representatives passed a resolution expressing sympathy with the aspirations of the Irish people for a government of their choice.[74] but when three delegates from the Irish Race Convention who also carried credentials from the de facto Irish government arrived in Paris on May thirty-first, the American peace delegation firmly refused them a hearing without the consent of Great Britain.[75]

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72 Frank Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal; an Account of the Signing of the Irish Treaty of 1921 from First-Hand Sources, London, 1935.

73 Dr. Patrick MacCartan, With De Valera in America, New York, 1932, 8-10.

74 Hearing Before the Committee of Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives, HRB, 404, December 12-13, 1919, Washington, 1919.

75 MacCartan, With De Valera in America, 118-120.

In further establishing themselves as the de facto government of Ireland, the Dail Eireann set up the Departments of Finance, Defense, Trade and Commerce, Agriculture, Home Affairs, Local Government, Labor, and Propaganda.[76] Sweeping Sinn Fein Party triumphs in by-elections in January and June, 1920 confirmed popular support of this program. In America, De Valera raised six million dollars in Irish Government bonds during an eighteen month tour; in Ireland, Michael Collins, the guiding spirit of the Irish Republican Brotherhood and director of the Department of Finance in the Irish Government raised close to two million dollars.[77]

The next departments to be organized were a Land Bank, a Land Commission, Arbitration Courts to settle land disputes,[78] a whole new framework of Civil and Criminal Courts to enforce the actions of the new Republican police force. By July, 1920, there were few places outside of Dublin and north-east Ulster where the King's Writ continued to function; it was fast being replaced by the effective court system of Sinn Fein.[79]

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76 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 31-34.

77 Ibid, 35. Concerning Michael Collins, cf. infra

78 An outgrowth of the Arbitration Courts set up by the British ten years before.

79 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 36-40.

As Prime Minister, Lloyd George was slow to realize the fact that in southern Ireland, British constitutional rule was over and that civil and legal administration had passed over to the Sinn Fein Government which held the republic as its political objective. He was much occupied with foreign affairs abroad and with industrial strife at home and he still thought in terms of Gladstonian Home Rule with self-determination for Ulster. In January, 1920, he scoffed at a proposal of Asquith to place Ireland on a Dominion basis.[80]

Asquith's comments had come a month before when the Government of Ireland Bill was introduced in the House of Commons. This measure was designed as an alternative to Home Rule according to the law of 1914, which was due to come into operation shortly and which neither the South nor Ulster wanted. The new arrangement was for the establishment of two separate provincial parliaments -- one for Ulster and one for the rest of Ireland -- with a joint council acting as a connecting link between them and as a foundation for a united government of the future should both sides agree to have it. Each provincial parliament would have legislative authority in domestic matters, education, housing, local government, agriculture and police and local judiciaries, but foreign affairs,

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80 Jones, Lloyd George, 188.

defense, customs, commerce and "other matters affecting the British Isles as a whole" including Crown succession, were reserved to the Imperial Parliament.[81] Discussion on the Government of Ireland Act lasted on and off ten months; the bill received the Royal Assent on December 23, 1920.

At the time of the Irish Declaration of Independence, a large part of the Sinn Fein organization was still averse to any kind of bloodshed and the Dail would go no further than to declare policemen of the British Government in Ireland, the Royal Irish Constabulary, traitors worthy of social ostracism.[82] As 1920 wore on, incidents of bloodshed multiplied under the stress of Volunteer raiding for arms and of police attempts to arrest Volunteers and leading Sinn Feiners. By the summer of that year, the police had given up all pretense of carrying out their civil duties and had withdrawn to the larger towns. In their place, the Black and Tans, so called from the color of their uniform, were sent over to Ireland. These men were generally veterans of the World War who answered advertisements in British newspapers to serve in Ireland for ten shillings a day and all found.[83]

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81 Debates, Commons (XXVI, (February 26, 1920), 26-31.

82 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 39-40.

83 Ibid., 40.

Malcom Thomson who wrote the official biography of Lloyd George, admitted those auxilliaries sent to Ireland "swiftly degenerated into a shameless, brutal, drunken rabble, recklessly burning, looting, massacring often without bothering to distinguish between the enemy and quite guiltless inhabitants."[34] Their superiors overlooked the excesses hoping the end would justify the means and that the severe reprisals would soon cow the Irish into subjection.[35]

As an answer to these tactics, the Irish themselves began a scarcely excusable and brutal imitation of them. For every Irishman who was shot, a policeman was killed and similar eye-for-an-eye penalties were assessed for all other English abuses committed in the name of martial law.[36]

Lloyd George, busy making postwar peace settlements, holding conferences concerning Germany, Poland and Russia, and attempting to end the coal strike, accepted the assurances of his advisors that a strong-hand policy was the only one which would succeed and he authorized reprisals against the Irish. For a time he had the support of most of the British people who were indignant over the murders of policemen and the de facto government's breaking all ties with the British Empire.

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34 Malcolm Thomson, Lloyd George, the Official Biography, London, 1948, 318.

35 Ibid, 319. Cf. Report of the American Commission on Conditions in Ireland, Washington, 1921

36 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 60-61.

The tide of public sentiment had turned, however, by the spring of 1921, when the excesses committed by the Black and Tans against the Irish people had revolted the English people and had convinced the Government that those who must be coerced were not a few thousand rebels but the whole Irish nation.[87]

In the fall of 1920, Arthur Henderson had asked in Parliament for an investigation into the causes, nature and extent of the reprisals on the part of those whose duty was the maintenance of law and order.[88] He was refused but his party, the Labour Party, sent their own committee of investigation into Ireland under his chairmanship. This committee's report was given on December twenty-ninth to a special Party conference. It found that the outrages on the Irish side were met with appalling reprisals by the Black and Tans on the Irish people, and that the Government was giving its full support to such reprisals. The situation was getting from bad to worse and the committee suggested that British forces be withdrawn from Ireland and that a constituent assembly be set up to frame a constitution for Ireland subject only to the protection of minorities and the prevention of Ireland becoming a military menace to Great Britain.[89]

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87 Thomson, Lloyd George, 319.

88 Debates, Commons, CXXXV (November 24, 1920), 516

89 G.D.H. Cole, History of the Labor Party, London, 1948, 109-110. Cf. British Labor Party, Report of the Commission of Enquiry into the Present Conditions in Ireland, London, 1920.

The reprisal policy eventually disgusted even the British forces in Ireland. In a Memorandum to the Cabinet written in May, 1921, General Nevil Macready, commander-in-chief of the British forces in Ireland, anticipated that by July he would have eighty thousand men under him. There would be no ammunition shortage, but the morale was so bad that unless the war were finished off by October, all troops and most of the Commanders and staffs would have to be changed.[90]

Lloyd George was by then ready to offer Dominion status to Ireland but he was uncertain as to how it would be received. In April, May and June, he arranged for approaches to be made to De Valera, President of the Dail Eireann, by Lord Derby, head of the Unionist Party, Sir James Craig, Ulster Unionist leader, Sir Alfred Cope, Assistant Undersecretary for Ireland, and General Johann Smuts, the South African statesman.[91] By the latter part of June Lloyd George was convinced that the time was ripe for making new proposals to Ireland.[92]

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90 Macready, Sir Nevil, Annals of an Active Life, London, 1924, II, 492-493.

91 Cf. infra 35.

92 MacArdle, Irish Republic, 446-491.

CHAPTER II

THE NEW IRISH POLICY APPEARS

JUNE, 1921-SEPTEMBER, 1921

From the beginning of the year 1921, the British press was increasingly critical of the state of affairs in Ireland condemning both the brutality of the reprisals and the Government's support of them. Some of the sharpest editorials appeared in the Jesuit magazine, Month. In its February issue the excesses of the Irish Republican Army were condemned but Month felt that it must "reprobate equally strongly" the continuous assassinations of alleged Sinn Feiners throughout the country "without any form of law, by forces of the Crown."[1] The next month, the editor pointed out that it was becoming more and more evident that the pacification of Ireland was necessary if the world were to regain peace in the present generation.[2]

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1 "Unchristian Practices in Ireland", Month, London, CXXXVIII, February, 1921, 174.

2 "Settlement in Ireland", Month, CXXXVIII, March, 1921, 262.

In a rather long article in the March issue of the Contemporary Review, Harold Spender blamed the Irish Civil War for all the misunderstanding between Great Britain and the United States whatever form it took -- refusal to compound the war debts of the Allies, revision upwards of the Panama Canal tolls.[3] America, he further argued, was necessarily concerned with the fate of Ireland in view of the great number of Irish immigrants to that country and their subsequent control of the local politics in several states and their responsibility for the daily newspapers which they helped write and avidly read.[4]

Spender saw the germs of a peaceful settlement with Ireland in the Government of Ireland Bill of 1920, which had given larger powers to Ireland than had any previous measure of Home Rule, while it reserved fewer services. By the third clause of that Act, the Parliament of Northern and Southern Ireland could merge themselves into one.[5] If Ireland refused to enter a conference for final settlement of difficulties, without the right to retain arms, Great Britain should not insist on conference for final settlement but should attempt to renew negotiations with prominent leaders begun in December, 1920, through the good offices of "some outstanding figure not immediately involved."[6]

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3 Harold Spender, "Ireland, a Plea for Concilliation", Contemporary Review, CXIX, March, 1921, 299; 301-305.

4 Ibid., 305.
5 Ibid., 306-307
6 Ibid., 308.

Even Sir Edward Carson, the Unionist party leader in Northern Ireland, who in 1912 had threatened civil war if a Home Rule bill were passed, spoke of compromise in a speech in February before the Ulster Reform Club. However, he sought all compromise to be in favor of Northern Ireland.[7] The Anglican Bishop of Manchester was more generous to the Nationalists. Writing in The Pilgrim, he referred to the duty of hearing the Irish cause sympathetically stated. The English had never considered the Irish Question without the reservation of Ireland never being independent in the sense of being able to form an alliance with a hostile country; they could not risk an enemy at their gates closing the seaways and completing their encirclement. Yet, that was exactly what Prussia said about Poland and England held that Poland had a right to be independent if she wished and the fact that Germany held her against her will was part of the proof that the German state system was inherently wicked.[8]

The failure of the British Army of Occupation to influence the Irish people was jokingly noted by Punch. It told how the Sinn Fein regime had changed the name of Kingstown to Dun Laoghaire, and those who could not pronounce this new name

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7 London Times, February 8, 1921, 12.

8 The Pilgrim, April, 1921, 245.

were in danger of being shot as "incurable West Britons". It published the work of a "West Briton poet" as representative of the opinion of the country:

> There once was a man of Dun Laoghaire
> Who said, "I am heartsick and waoghaire!"
> They've made Ireland a hell
> And they can't even spell
> Oh life is most damnably draoghaire."[9]

In Parliament on the twenty-first of June, Lord Chancellor Birkenhead admitted that the Irish policy of the Government had been a failure. His solution was far from conciliatory. He declared Home Rule with some financial concessions was no longer a satisfactory offer in the Irish mind. Ireland demanded independence. Since that could not be conceded, "by force alone should the prevailing mischiefs be extirpated."[10]

The following day, a new Irish policy was born. King George V who had gone to Belfast to open the first session of the Parliament established concurrently with a southern Irish Parliament in the Government of Ireland Act. His speech called for conciliation and compromise from all Irishmen and the cooperation of all sections of Ireland in working for peace and progress. The Ulster Parliament was pointing the way for the southern Irish Parliament to establish itself. The future of

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9 "Another Setback in Ireland", Punch, CLX, June 15, 1921, 461.

10 Debates, Lords, CXLIII, June 21, 1921, 695.

Ireland lay in the hands of the Irish people themselves, he said He looked for the day in which the Irish people, North and South under one Parliament or two, as those Parliaments might themselves decide, should "work together in common love for Ireland upon the sure foundation of mutual justice and respect."[11]

In a leading editorial the following day, the London Times applauded the speech of the King and commented favorably upon a letter written to the editor by an Irishman, Lord Dunraven, who appealed for conciliation, saying, "Ireland must, in order to reconcile her claim to self-determination with the British claim to self-preservation, be offered a grant of full fiscal and financial control."[12] On the twenty-fourth, Lloyd George sent a letter to Eamon De Valera inviting him, and the Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, Sir James Craig, to a conference in London "to explore to the utmost the possibility of settlement."[13]

Before replying to the invitation, De Valera called a meeting in Dublin with leading Unionists from all parts of

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11 Times, June 23, 1921, 5.

12 Ibid, 7.

13 Lloyd George to De Valera, June 24, 1921. Correspondence between Lloyd George, Johann Smuts and De Valera from June 24, 1921 to August 4, 1921 was reprinted in the London Times on August 15, 1921.

Ireland: Sir James Craig, Lord Midleton, who had been representative of the Unionists of southern Ireland at the Buckingham Palace Conference in 1914 and the Convention of 1917-1918;[14] Sir Maurice Dockrell, a Member for Rathmines, County Dublin; Sir Robert Woods, a Member for Trinity College and former president of the Irish Medical Association and the Royal College of Surgeons; and Sir Andrew Jamieson, Chairman of the British Lights Commission and a Privy Councillor for Ireland. All but Sir James Craig came to Dublin for the discussions.

After De Valera made it clear to them that a truce must be declared in Ireland before peace talks could begin, Lord Midleton made a quick trip to London. There he obtained the consent of Lloyd George to conduct direct negotiations with De Valera, should Craig decline to be a party to a truce, and also, a letter from the Prime Minister authorizing the British Commander-in-Chief in Ireland, Sir Nevil Macready, to attempt to negotiate a truce with the Irish leaders.[15]

A truce was signed, and by its provisions the British agreed to avoid provocative display of officers, armed or unarmed, to stop the pursuit of Irishmen and war materials, to end

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14 St. John Broderick, Earl of Midleton, had served as Undersecretary of Foreign Affairs 1898-1900; Secretary of State for War 1900-1903 and Secretary of State for India 1903-1905. Currently he was Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

15 Lord Midleton, Records and Recollections, 1865-1939, London, 1939, 200-203.

the use of secret agents and the curfew, to end the pursuit of or observance of lines of communication or connection, and to extend the truce to all parts of Ireland including the area under martial law. In turn, the Irish would cease attacks on Crown forces, avoid provocative display of their own troops, avoid interference with Government or private property, and discountenance and prevent any action which might occasion police intervention.[16]

The signing of the truce was hailed by newspapers all over England. Quotations were printed in the Times from journals around the world -- the Milan Secolo, the Paris Excelsior, and the Chicago Tribune among them -- hailing the truce as the first step towards peace in Ireland.[17] While some people might denounce the agreement as "unworthy of a self-respecting Nation" whose duty it was to crush rebellion and not parley with it, the Manchester Guardian said that among the "less implacable zealots" there would be a "universal feeling of relief that a series of horrible and discrediting outrages...should for the time being at least have ceased."[18] In view of the conference that De Valera had held with the Irish Unionist Party leaders, the

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16 Times, July 11, 1921, 12.

17 Times, July 12, 1921, 9.

18 Manchester Guardian, July 9, 1921, 6.

Guardian urged that he be accepted by the Prime Minister as representative of all Ireland.[19]

At a breakfast meeting given for the Prime Minister and twenty-five English Unionist Members of Parliament, Lord Derby[20] had declared that "very generous conditions" should be offered to Ireland, provided that the integrity of the Empire were preserved and that Ulster was in no way coerced.[21] In order that there would be no need for coercing his section of the country, Sir James Craig kept insisting that the autonomy of the six north-east counties must be the groundwork for any settlement.[22]

On July fourteenth, Eamon De Valera and Lloyd George held the first of a series of talks on the permanent solution of the Irish difficulties. The nature of the discussions was not released to the press and speculation ran high. On the twentieth, De Valera was handed a draft of the British proposals for Irish government.

The British Government began the draft by declaring themselves to be actuated by a desire to end the unhappy divisions between Great Britain and Ireland which produced many

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19 Guardian, July 13, 1921, 7.

20 Cf. supra 27. Lord Derby (Edward George Villiers Stanley, Earl of Derby), a veteran Army officer had served as Lord of the Treasury 1895-1900, as Postmaster General 1903-1905, as Secretary of State for War 1916-1918 and as Ambassador to France 1918-1921.

21 Times, July 13, 1921, 12.

22 Ibid.

conflicts in Ireland in the past and which at present threatened her peace and well-being. For the welfare of the country, Ireland, and the Empire, for the cause of peace in the world, they desired that the Irish people might enjoy "as worthy and as complete an expression of their political and spiritual ideals within the Empire as any of the numerous and varied nations united in allegiance to his Majesty's Throne."[23] The British people could not believe that where Canada and South Africa with equal or even greater difficulties had succeeded, Ireland would fail, and the Government were determined as far as they themselves could assure it, that nothing should hinder Irish statesmen from joining together to build up an Irish Free State in free and willing cooperation with the other peoples of the Empire.[24]

Earnestly desiring to obliterate old quarrels and to enable Ireland to face the future with her own strength and hope, the British Government proposed that Ireland should assume the status of a Dominion with a Dominion's powers and privileges. Ireland should enjoy her own courts of law and judges; she should enjoy complete autonomy in taxation and finance; she should maintain her own military forces for home defense and

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23 Times, August 15, 1921, 8.

24 Times, August 15, 1921, 8.

her own constabulary and police force; she should take over Irish postal services and all matters relating thereto; education, land agriculture, mines and minerals, forestry, housing, labor, unemployment, transport, trade, public health, health insurance and the liquor traffic. In summary, she could exercise all powers and privileges upon which the autonomy of the self-governing Dominions is based, subject to six specific reservations. The Royal Navy alone could control the seas around Ireland and Great Britain and the Navy alone could enjoy such rights and liberties as were essential for its purposes in the Irish harbors and on the Irish coast. The Irish Territorial force was to be limited by a ration involving other parts of the British Isles. The Royal Air Force was to be given needed facilities. Voluntary recruitment for British military forces was to be permitted throughout Ireland. No protective duties or other restrictions on the flow of free trade were to be allowed. The Irish people must agree to assume responsibility for a share of the British National Debt and the liability for pensions arising out of the World War.[25]

Any settlement between Great Britain and Ireland would have to allow for full recognition of existing powers and privileges of the Parliament of Northern Ireland. The British

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25 Ibid.

Government would let Irishmen themselves determine by negotiations between themselves whether the new powers that the Pact defined were to be taken over by Ireland as a whole and administrated by a single Irish body, or be taken over separately by Southern and Northern Ireland, with or without a joint authority to harmonize their common interests.[26]

While no official report of the conversations held by Lloyd George and De Valera and of the terms of the draft treaty which De Valera brought back to Dublin for the consideration of his Cabinet was given to the Press, the daily newspapers speculated freely and with amazing accuracy as to what had been offered Ireland. Most of them looked upon the offer of limited Home Rule as a necessary concession in the interests of peace; a means of letting England out of a long-standing and entangled mess and of letting Irishmen settle their own problems.

As the Times saw it, men were beginning to realize that many issues which they once deemed vital were in truth subordinate to the dominant consideration of ending internecine strife once and for all. The Ministers had to either revert to methods and morals of the seventeenth century or to recognize the national rights of Ireland within the Empire and accept all that such a recognition implied.[27] The concessions of the Government

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26 Ibid. Text printed in the Times, August 15, 1921.

27 Times, August 2, 1921, 9.

were as generous as they might be while retaining the guarantees made to Northern Ireland in 1920. The final settlement lay within the hands of Irishmen of the North and South; Englishmen might only cast their influence on the side of peace.[28]

The ultra-Conservative Morning Post dissented. It denounced the Government for dealing with "Irish Bolsheviks" whose rebellion and violent aftermath bore a close resemblance to its counterpart in Russia.[29]

In Parliament, each day brought queries as to the nature of the offer handed De Valera on July twentieth. On August eleventh, Austen Chamberlain, the leader of the House, told the Members that a reply had been received from De Valera and forwarded to the Prime Minister who was in Paris at the time. It was "so obvious" that this reply should be seen first by him and considered by him in Cabinet before any statement could be made concerning the proposals or the reply that De Valera had made.[30]

The proposals were to be discussed in the extralegal Irish Parliament, the Dail, when its second session opened on August sixteenth. To secure a more favorable hearing for their offer, the British Government released from British prisons and internment camps all Dail Members charged with revolutionary

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28 Times, July 23, 1921, 7.
29 London Morning Post, August 15, 1921, 11.
30 Debates, Commons CXLVI, (August 11, 1921) 687.

activity, including a Mr. McKeown who had already confessed to murdering a policeman. The release of the prisoners brought sharp criticisms from both Houses of Parliament,[31] but approval from the newspapers which pointed out that the Dail was the only effective legislature in three-fourths of Ireland, since the Sinn Fein candidates who had won practically all the seats in the Parliament of Southern Ireland set up by the Act of 1920 had absented themselves from that body to force its dissolution.[32]

In Commons, Austen Chamberlain explained that the Government's action in releasing all Irish prisoners was based on the existing situation in Ireland and on the importance at the time of avoiding a conflict between the civil and the military authorities. The release was not due to any decision given by a Civil Court in Ireland. Civil courts had no power to overrule decisions of the military courts in martial law area of Ireland. Rather "the Government decided that to differentiate between the case of J. J. McKeown and the other con-

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31 Cf. Debates, Commons CXLVI, 437-438. Mr Gwynne, Sir William Davison, Major Cohen, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Moles were the chief antagonists; their complaints were passed over by the Speaker.

32 The Parliament of Southern Ireland was set up at the same time the Ulster Parliament was, in 1920. The Government of Ireland Act in establishing it provided that if the elected Members of the Southern Irish Parliament had not met by a certain date, that Parliament would cease to be legal and a Crown Colony government would be set up in Southern Ireland.

victed men might endanger the prospects of a successful issue of the present negotiations" and they subsecuently ordered him released. They had also been influenced by the fact that McKeown in a previous affray had saved the lives of several wounded policemen. Those facts had been testified at his trial.[33]

On August fifteenth, the Government released to the press proposals given De Valera on July twentieth and the answer that had just been received from him. De Valera had written that a treaty of free association with the British Commonwealth group as with a partial league of nations was something that the Irish Government was ready to recommend to their people. As a Government they would negotiate it and take responsibility for it had they the assurance that entry into such an association would secure for Ireland the allegiance of her dissenting minority. However, the treaty draft which he had been given involved a control which Ireland could not admit; it proposed a dominion status that was "illusory". He proposed that the question of Ireland's share of the public debt be determined by the appointment of three arbiters.[34]

In reply, Lloyd George insisted that there could be no compromise on the matter of allegiance to the King and no foreign arbitration. The British Government could not go beyond

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33 Debates, Commons CXLVI, (August 10, 1921) 438.

34 De Valera to Lloyd George, August 10, 1921.

the proposals it had already made, but it was ready to discuss them in detail, whenever Mr. De Valera accepted them in principle.[35]

During the time that the Irish Government was pondering this ultimate offer of the British, De Valera received a friendly letter of advice from General J. C. Smuts. The Irish leader had written Smuts of his desire to meet with the representatives of Ulster to discuss the situation, and the General had tried to interest Sir James Craig in such a conference but Craig had refused to talk to De Valera anywhere but in the presence of Lloyd George.[36]

General Smuts was quite sure that Ulster was satisfied with her present position and would on no account agree to any change. On the other hand, De Valera, who insisted that Ulster must come into a United Ireland before further progress could be made, was as immovable as Craig. Force was out of the question on either premise, so the process of arriving at an agreement would take time. For that reason, he could be of no further use as an intermediary and was reluctantly returning to South Africa.

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35 Lloyd George to De Valera, August 13, 1921.

36 Smuts to De Valera, August 4, 1921. The correspondence was collected by the American Association for International Conciliation: "Relations between Great Britain and Ireland; Proposals of the British Government, July 20, 1921 and Correspondence between Mr. Lloyd George and Mr. De Valera", International Conciliation, No. 163 (November, 1921), 16.

In parting, Smuts strongly advised De Valera to concentrate on securing a free constitution for the twenty-six southern counties; through a successful running of the Irish state and the pull of economic and other peaceful forces Ulster would eventually be brought in. Such a solution would be repugnant to all Irish patriots who looked upon Irish unity as the sine qua non of any Irish settlement, but a wise man while fighting for an ideal, learns to bow before the inevitable. He believed that there was no single clear-cut solution of the Irish question possible at the time. Ireland would have to pass through several stages, the first of which was a free Constitution and the last of which would be the inclusion of Ulster and the full recognition of Irish unity. As cause generates effect, he said, only the first would render the last stage possible. To reverse the process and to begin with Irish unity as a first step was to imperil the whole settlement. Irish unity should be the ideal to which the whole process should be directed.[37]

As he saw it, the Republic was only one form of freedom; the other form, dominion, status, which the Prime Minister had offered Ireland, was working well in all parts of the British League. What was good enough for thosenations ought to be good enough for Ireland. For Irishmen to say to the world that

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37 Ibid., 17-18.

they would not be satisfied with the status of the great British Dominions would be to alienate all the sympathy which so far had been the main support of the Irish cause.[38]

Publication of the Irish correspondence in the newspapers before it had been submitted to Parliament considerably angered many of the Members. "Why," asked one, Brigadier-General Croft, "should the correspondence be made public before the question was discussed in Parliament?"[39] The Government's defense was that the reply had been received late Saturday night and for the convenience of the Members, it had been given to the newspapers so that they would be well acquainted with it when they received it on Monday.[40]

On the twenty-third, the Dail unanimously confirmed the Irish Cabinet's rejection of the British offer, but in a letter written the following day, De Valera assured the Prime Minister that Ireland hoped to end the conflict and the Dail was ready to appoint representatives to negotiate settlement on the broad basis of "government by the consent of the Governed."[41]

In answering this letter, Lloyd George reaffirmed the proposals offered Ireland on July twentieth, which, he said, were the utmost which the Empire could reasonably offer, or

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38 Ibid., 19-20.

39 Debates, Commons CXLVI, (August 17, 1921), 1413.

40 Ibid.

41 De Valera to Lloyd George, August 23, 1921, in the Times, August 26, 1921, 8.

which Ireland could reasonably expect. They did fulfill the wish of the Irish leader that the principle of "government by the consent of the Governed" be the broad guiding principle of any settlement which the Irish plenipotentiaries might negotiate. Such a principle had first been developed in England and was spread by her throughout the world. It was the very life of the British Commonwealth. Through it, Britain could heal the old misunderstandings and might achieve an enduring partnership as honorable to Ireland as to the other nations of which the Commonwealth consisted. For De Valera to demand that Ireland be treated as a separate sovereign power, and not owing allegiance to the Crown and loyalty to the sister nations of the Commonwealth was to advance claims which the most famous national leaders in Irish history explicitly disavowed.[42]

In his next letter, De Valera wrote that he would "refrain from commenting on the fallacious historical references" in the letter of Lloyd George; "the present is the reality with which we have to deal."[43] The people of Ireland, acknowledging no voluntary union with Great Britain, had "by an overwhelming majority" declared for independence, set up a

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42 Lloyd George to De Valera, August 24, 1921, in the Times, August 26, 1921, 10.

43 De Valera to Lloyd George, August 30, 1921, in the Times, September 5, 1921, 6.

Republic, and more than once confirmed their choice." England was acting on the basis of a contract of union the circumstances of which were notorious and on such premises was the offer of July twentieth based. Its proposals were an invitation to Ireland to enter into a Commonwealth under conditions which determined a status definitely inferior to that of the free states. Canada, Australia, South Africa and New Zealand were all guaranteed against domination of any major state, not only by acknowledged constitutional rights which gave them equality of status with Great Britain, and freedom of control of their own affairs, but by the thousands of miles that separated them from Great Britain. The conditions sought to be imposed on Ireland would rob her of the guarantee of right by dividing her into two artificial states, each destructive of the other's influence in any common council.[44]

As the weeks wore on after the adjournment of Parliament in August, the newspapers assumed widely divergent views on the Irish situation. Some deplored the compromising attitude of the Government; others asked, "Could Ireland dare refuse?" Allegiance to the King and Commonwealth was held to be indispensable by all. They echoed the statement of the Daily

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44. Ibid.

Telegraph:

> A conference cannot go on while Sinn Fein in reply (sic) repudiates allegiance to the King and membership in the British Commonwealth of Nations.[45]

The Morning Post considered Lloyd George failure -- "the Prime Minister has in fact been openly whipped by De Valera and puts up with the whipping"[46] -- who must either resign or take up once again the task he should never have abandoned, that of reestablishing the King's Sovereignty in Ireland. The Irish were fools not to accept the generous offer made them which would certainly be endorsed should they hold a plebiscite in Ireland.[47]

A few papers, like the Manchester Guardian applauded the stand taken by the Irish. The Prime Minister who posed before the world as the friend and champion of small nations and national freedom told Ireland that she must kneel before England would talk with her.[48] The Manchester Guardian invited Sinn Fein leaders to put forth their own proposals for settlement -- any proposals not inconsistent with allegiance to the Crown and harmonious working with England.[49] Renewal of strife

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45 London Daily Telegraph, September 16, 1921, 7.

46 Morning Post, September 16, 1921, 9.

47 Ibid.

48 London Daily Herald, September 16, 1921.

49 Guardian, September 16, 1921, 8.

was unthinkable; "a settlement can and must be reached." England had in the past injured Ireland enough and owed her enormous reparation; she surely could never quarrel with her again.[50]

In his letter written on August tenth, De Valera had mentioned making a "treaty of free association with the British Commonwealth."[51] A month later, on September seventh, the British Cabinet met at Inverness and sent a request to De Valera to reply immediately whether he was prepared to enter a conference as to how the association of Ireland with the British Empire could best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations.[52] In answer to this letter, the Irish leader and his Cabinet nominated delegates for the conference and submitted their names to the Dail for approval. The rest of the month was to be taken up by a further exchange of letters over the channel concerning how the Irish delegates were to be received in England.

De Valera had insisted that Ireland had formally declared her independence and recognized itself as an independent state. Only as representatives of that state, and as its chosen guardians had the delegates any authority to act on behalf of its people.[53] Lloyd George objected. If Great Britain accepted

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50 Guardian, September 9, 1921, 3.

51 Cf. infra. 41.

52 Lloyd George to De Valera, September 7, 1921 in Times, September 7, 1921, 7.

53 De Valera to Lloyd George, undated, in Times September 16, 1921, 6.

conference with the Irish delegates on the basis of such a claim, it would constitute official recognition by his Majesty's Government of the severance of Ireland from the Empire and of its existence as an independent Republic.[54] De Valera wired back that the Irish delegates could not accept a conference on the basis described by the Prime Minister.[55] Two days later, he assured Lloyd George that the Irish did not ask him to abandon any principle even informally, but "we can only recognize ourselves for what we are."[56]

De Valera was careful to end his letters and telegrams optimistically. Despite present difficulties concerning status, all would work out satisfactorily. The Irish had no thought at any time of asking Lloyd George to accept conditions prior to a conference, he wired the Prime Minister on the nineteenth. A treaty of accomodation and association properly concluded between Ireland and England and between the states of the British Commonwealth would end the dispute forever and "enable the two nations to settle down in peace, each pursuing its own industrial development and each contributing its own quota to civil-

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54 Lloyd George to De Valera, September 15, 1921, in Times, September 16, 1921, 8.

55 De Valera to Lloyd George, September 16, 1921, in New York Times, September 17, 1921, 3.

56 De Valera to Lloyd George, September 17, 1921, in London Times, September 19, 1921, 8.

ization, but working together in free and friendly cooperation in affairs of agreed common concern."[57]

On September twenty-ninth, the Prime Minister stated that further communications with De Valera would be useless. He issued an invitation to a conference on October eleventh without preliminary conditions:

> We can meet your delegates as spokesmen of the people whom you represent with a view to ascertaining how the association of Ireland with the community known as the British Empire may best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations.[58]

A conference, provided it was one that Ireland might enter without preliminary conditions, was the best and most hopeful way to an understanding, De Valera felt. The delegates could explore every possibility of settlement by personal discussion.[59] He accepted the invitation, confident that, since he had not surrendered on the question of Irish sovereignty, he had gained the advantage.

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57 De Valera to Lloyd George, September 19, 1921, in London Times, September 20, 1921, 10.

58 Lloyd George to De Valera, September 29, 1921, in Times, September 30, 1921, 8.

59 De Valera to Lloyd George, September 29, 1921 in Times, September 30, 1921, 8.

As the month of October began, Anglo-Irish relations were surprisingly good. The truce of July eleventh was being well kept and people were looking forward to the conference in London scheduled for the eleventh as the means of settling once and for all the Irish Question. Some of the die-hard Unionists deplored the fact that the "self-styled President of the Irish Republic" had committed himself to nothing and was coming to the conference as one who had gained his point,[60] most of Great Britain breathed a sigh of relief that wiser counsels had prevailed and peace in Ireland seemed near at hand.

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60 Morning Post, October 1, 1921, 5.

CHAPTER III

PERSONALITIES AT THE LONDON CONFERENCE

By the end of September, De Valera, with the aid of Erskine Childers, Gavan Duffy, and others, had sketched the outline of a draft treaty which he would be willing to sponsor and to recommend. External association of Ireland with the British Commonwealth of Nations was its basis. Its terms left the Irish Republic intact. According to the terms of this "Draft Treaty A"[1] the British Commonwealth should recognize Ireland as sovereign and an independent state and should renounce all claim to interfere in Irish affairs. Ireland would become an "external associate" of the Commonwealth. The British Government would guarantee perpetual Irish neutrality and the Government would guarantee the integrity and inviolability of Irish territory as well. The League of Nations and other states would join in that guarantee after the states of the British Commonwealth had supported Ireland's claim to membership in the League. If an Anglo-Irish treaty were signed, all British armed military and armed police and all other police recruited since

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[1] Text is given in MacArdle, Irish Republic, Appendix 16, 937-939.

January 21, 1919, would be withdrawn from Ireland.[2]

Along with Draft Treaty A, the Irish delegates who left for the conference in London carried these credentials:

> In virtue of the authority vested in me by the Dail Eireann, I hereby appoint Arthur Griffith, T.D., Minister for Foreign Affairs; Michael Collins, T.D., Minister for Finance; Robert Barton, T.D., Minister for Economic Affairs; Edmund Duggan, T.D., and George Gavan Duffy, T.D. as Envoys Plenipotentiaries from the Government of the Republic Ireland to negotiate and conclude on behalf of Ireland with the representatives of His Majesty George V, a treaty or treaties of association and accomodation between Ireland and the community of nations known as the British Commonwealth. In witness whereof, I hereunder subscribe my name as President.
>
> Eamon De Valera[3]

While these credentials gave full powers to the Irish delegates, they were warned to notify the Cabinet in Dublin and to await their reply before making any final decision on a leading question and before signing any treaty.[4]

De Valera had been in America on a bond-selling campaign in 1919 and quite likely he remembered the criticism that President Wilson incurred when he left the country to attend the Paris Peace Conference at the head of the American delegation

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2 Ibid.

3 Ibid., 530. T.D. is the abbreviation for the Gaelic title of Members of the Dail.

4 Ibid.

which failed to include legislators belonging to the opposite party. Doubtless, too, he remembered the difficulty Wilson had in trying to persuade these slighted Senators to ratify the peace treaty. Keeping the American example in mind and reflecting on the desirability of the delegates' obligation to take time to refer certain important conference matters back to Dublin, and to postpone an answer to a delicate question posed by the British until the Irish President had been consulted, De Valera chose not to attend the London conference in person, and recommended that his Vice-President, Arthur Griffith, be chosen head of the Irish delegation; that Michael Collins, Irish Minister of Finance and director of the guerrilla warfare campaign waged by the Irish Revolutionary Brotherhood during the previous year be its second in command and that Gavan Duffy be a legal advisor.[5]

Michael Collins nominated Edmund Duggan as a second constitutional expert; Richard Barton as a specialist in economics, and Barton's first cousin, Erskine Childers as secretary to the Irish delegation. All the nominees were approved without much discussion at a secret Dail Cabinet meeting.[6]

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5 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 95-96.

6 Ibid., 98-99.

The members of the Irish negotiating team differed widely in background, training and occupation. From the first, their British counterparts decided that two of them, Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins were the delegates -- the men whom they must convince.[7] Small, quiet, drab-looking, forty-nine year old Arthur Griffith had, since the founding of Sinn Fein in 1905, been telling his fellow-countrymen to look to themselves and not to England for salvation.[8] Lloyd George described him as"the most un-Irish leader that ever led Ireland, "quiet to the point of gentleness, reserved almost to the point of appearing saturnine.[9] He used the fewest possible words to express his meaning; answering in monosyllables where most men would consider an oratorical deliverance to be demanded by the occasion, and would rather answer the questions of others than make speeches of his own. All too familiar with Ireland's sad story, he was ready to strain every nerve to make a renewal of hostilities impossible.[10]

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7 On the opening day of the conference the British delegates were provided with a thumbnail sketch of each of the men they were conferring with. For a facsimile, cf. Frederick W.E. Smith-Brooks, 2nd Earl of Birkenhead, Biography of Frederick Edwin Smith-Brooks, First Earl of Birkenhead by His Son, London, 1935. The British soon agreed with the report concerning the leadership of Griffith and Collins.

8 Cf. Supra., 18.

9 David Lloyd George, Is It Peace?, London, 1923, 271.

10 Jones, Lloyd George, 190-191. For Jones, cf. Supra. 15

In strict contrast was tall, handsome thirty-one year old Michael Collins. The Prime Minister found him vivacious, buoyant, highly strung. He would pass readily from gaiety to grimness and back to gaiety; he was full of fascination and charm but full of dangerous fire as well.[11] When Collins arrived in London, a romantic legend had already gathered about stories of his daring adventures and magical escapes from the British who had placed a price of ten thousand pounds on his head. Within a short time, Tom Jones, secretary to the British delegation, noted that Collins' dislike for petty detail, and his concentration on the main issues; his willingness to admit blunders and even worse on his side, were to capture for Collins the personal regard of everyone "from the Prime Minister who had to do business with him, to the girls who pursued him for favors."[12]

Economic advisor Richard Barton was of the country-gentleman class. A Protestant graduate of Christchurch and Oxford, he owned a large estate in County Wicklow. After serving as a British officer in the World War, Barton had joined the Dail Cabinet as Director of Agriculture. Arrested, escaped and rearrested for his nationalist activities, Barton had been released by the British only a short time before he was appointed

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11 Lloyd George, Is It Peace?, 272.

12 Tom Jones, Lloyd George, 191.

a conference delegate and thus was psychologically apart from the current Irish political idea -- external association.[13]

Gavan Duffy, one of the two legal experts on the Irish team, was the son of Sir Charles Gavan Duffy whose career had included such diverse activities as organizing the Young Ireland movement and being Prime Minister of Victoria. The young Duffy studied at Stonyhurst and in France and then began practicing law in London where he served as counsel for Roger Casement.[14] Elected to the Dail Eireann, Duffy played a leading role in writing the Irish Declaration of Independence and served as the Sinn Fein Envoy to France.[15]

The other legal expert, Edmund Duggan, a sober and resolute lawyer, had fought in the Easter Rebellion, had been taken prisoner and subsequently released. Until his re-internment in 1920, he served as Director of Intelligence for the

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13 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 134. Lloyd George omitted descriptions of the other official Irish delegates, but went on to characterize Erskine Childers, secretary to the delegation, whom he considered as De Valera's personal emissary.

14 Cf. supra 10 Casement was captured, tried and convicted of treason.

15 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 133.

Irish Republican Army.[16]

The biggest thorn in Prime Minister Lloyd George's side all through the conference, so he felt, was not a delegate but Erskine Childers, first-secretary to the Irish delegation, who had served with distinction as a British naval officer during the World War. A writer of some note[17] who had left his position as clerk in the House of Commons to work for the cause of Irish nationalism.[18] In appearance he was a man of slight figure whose refined and intellectual countenance, whose calm and courteous demeanor, the Prime Minister found, "offered no clue to the fierce passions which raged inside his breast."[19] Lloyd George felt that in every critical part of the negotiations he was part of a sinister role, fulfilling faithfully the trust that De Valera, "that visionary",[20] placed in him. Every draft he wrote (and all the first drafts were written by him) challenged every fundamental position to which the British delegates were irrevocably committed.[21] Childers' assistant was another British ex-serviceman, John Chartres, who had served in

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16 Ibid., 132.

17 His writings range from a multi-volume History of the Boer War to "The Riddle on the Sands" considered one of the best mystery stories of the twentieth century.

18 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 132.

19 Lloyd George, Is It Peace?, 273.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid.

the Intellgience Branch of the Ministry of Munitions during the war.[22]

Great Britain was represented by seven very capable negotiators under the leadership of Prime Minister Lloyd George. As a Welsh-speaking Celt, Lloyd George could talk to perfection the jargon of nationalist aspirations, but could remain far more unsympathetic than an Englishman would have been to the demand that such aspirations should find expression in political freedom. Two weeks before the opening of the conference in a speech at Barnsley, he drew attention to the fact that in Wales there was a larger number of people conversing in the native language than there was in Ireland. There was a great living literature of this distinct nationality written by some of the most cultured men in the British Isles. The people of Wales had a greater claim than anybody in the whole British Empire to set up an independent republic, but they would not![23]

To demand independence would be folly for Wales. It would weaken not only herself, but the United Kingdom and the British Empire as well. No Welsh patriot outside of a lunatic asylum would demand it. How much better it would be for Ireland to accept membership in the Empire and join the "gallant, proud,

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22 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 133.

23 Times, September 29, 1921, 9.

and fearless nations, young and old, at the Imperial Conferences!" [24] A Canadian was as proud of being a Canadian as an American was of being a citizen of the United States, but all the same the Canadians had a great sense of pride of belonging to the greatest family of nations in the world.[25]

It should be the same with Ireland. Lloyd George believed that when the Irish people realized that the essence, the substance of freedom, real freedom was theirs and all they were asked to do was to come into the proudest community of free nations in the world as free men, they would realize that their destiny was greatest as a free people inside a free federation of free peoples.[26]

From the lower middle-class group, Lloyd George owed everything to his own merits and exertions. Once his mind was made up, it could brook no arguments. When apparently he did commit himself, he was skillful at leaving just one way of escape. As the country's leading politician, he had to weigh at each new turn of events, how would Parliament stand.[27]

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24 Ibid.

25 Ibid., The mention of Canada is interesting. When the terms of the Articles of Agreement were published in December, it was explicitly pointed out that Ireland was to enjoy the same rights and privileges of a dominion as Canada.

26 Ibid.

27 Thomson, Lloyd George, 317.

Second in command on the British team was Lord Chancellor Birkenhead, the foremost advocate of his day, an academic authority on the British Constitution, and the author of a volume on international law. In a leading speech in Parliament in June, Birkenhead (who as Galloper Smith had played a leading role in the Ulster covenanting campaign in 1912) had insisted that the Irish rebels must be crushed by force. Since then, he had gone along with the attitude of conciliation assumed by the Government, after His Majesty's Speech in Belfast on June twenty-third.[28] A Unionist, he entered the conference with an open mind and held the utmost respect for the Irish delegates, especially Michael Collins, who, in October, submitted to him a memorandum on the means of associating Ireland with the British Commonwealth. This memorandum he considered remarkable; as a prefiguring of the British Commonwealth under the Statute of Westminster he afterwards related.[29]

The father of Sir Austen Chamberlain, third member of the British team, had abandoned Liberalism rather than yield a subordinate legislature to Ireland. Sir Austen was graduated from Cambridge and for three years had travelled extensively on the continent. He entered Parliament as a Liberal-Unionist member for the Border Burghs and made one of his first success-

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28 Cf. supra 31-32.

29 Frederick Edwin, Second Earl of Birkenhead, Birkenhead, II, London, 1935.

ful speeches in Commons, an attack on the second Home Rule Bill. He served in the Cabinet as Postmaster, and as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and was almost named head of the Conservative Party in 1911 when Bonar Law assumed leadership. He replaced Law in 1921, when he assumed leadership of his party in the House of Commons.[30]

In 1912, with characteristic daring, Winston Churchill, the fourth British representative at the conference, had addressed a Home Rule meeting in Belfast, the stronghold of the Ulster Unionists. Two months later he moved the second reading of the Home Rule Bill and with Lloyd George he continued to be a star debater for that cause during the next year and a half. By 1913, he was supporting the exclusion of Ulster as a means of preventing civil war in Ireland. As Colonial Secretary in 1921, in the absence of an Irish Secretary, Churchill became the Cabinet Minister associated with Lloyd George during the Irish negotiations.[31]

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30 Charles Petrie, "Sir Austen Chamberlain", Dictionary of National Biography 1931-1940, London, 1947, Cf. Sir Austen Chamberlain, Down the Years, London, 1935; Sir Charles Petrie, Life and Letters of Sir Austen Chamberlain, Two Volumes, London, 1939-1940.

31 Malcolm Thomson, Life and Times of Winston Churchill, London, 1945,79. Lewis Broad, Winston Churchill, London, 1941; Virginia Spencer Cowles, Winston Churchill, The Era and the Man, a Portrait, London, 1941; Philip Guedella, Mr. Churchill, London, 1941.

The remaining British negotiators may be grouped and described as the "other men". They were Sir Hamar Greenwood, Chief Secretary for Ireland, whose stern policy of repression introduced the Black and Tans into Ireland; Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, a solicitor and Conservative Member of Parliament who had been Secretary for War since February of 1921; and the British Attorney-General Sir Gordon Hewart. Gathered around the Conference table with them were the British secretaries: Lionel Curtis, Sir Edward Grigg and Tom Jones,[32] who was to carry important and confidential messages from the Prime Minister to the residence of the Irish delegates in Hans Place during the next two months. It was Jones' diplomatic manner that was to obtain a promise in writing from Arthur Griffith, not to break negotiations over the question of Ulster.[33]

The British delegates had the advantages of negotiating calibre, experience and unity while the Prime Minister directed their strategy and tactics. The meetings were held in London, their capital and they could call and call off conferences at will. Finally they carried a "big stick" -- the threat of what England could do to Ireland in the event that negotiations broke down.

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32 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 34-25; Who's Who? Seventy-third year of Edition, London, 1921.

33 Cf. supra

On the other hand, the Irish had the advantage of being able to give their full attention to the conference, without being concerned with other affirs of state. They had no concern about their political futures since they had long held personal fortune subordinate to the ideals for which they were striving.

Agreement would be difficult, the British press agreed. Most editors, however, felt it was not impossible to attain. The Manchester Guardian pointed out that every one of the Irish delegates was pledged by oath to support and defend the Irish Republic,[34] and they had come to London to see how near an approach to that they could induce the British Government to accord and how much less than that they could recommend their fellow countrymen to accept. It was a situation as difficult as it was unprecedented. It would demand on both sides an approach both practical and conciliatory were a solution to be reached.[35]

Yet, the Guardian believed that there was a good chance of success. The temper of both sides was good. They were sick of conflict and they realized that at the bottom there was no fundamental divergence of aim or interest which need keep them apart. The Irish representatives should concentrate on the actual liberties in question and on safeguards for them.[36]

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35 Manchester Guardian, October 10, 1921, 6.

36 Ibid.

For the first time in more than a century, a Times editorial declared, Ireland had escaped from the entanglements of British party politics into the open field of Imperial statecraft. The conclusion of peace with Germany had found the British Commonwealth of free nations consciously possessed of a new idealism and a complete and almost settled polity. Insofar as the Dominions were concerned, the Empire in the old sense had passed and a new relationship had succeeded it. It remained to be seen whether the ideals of the Irish leaders could be reconciled to that relationship.[37]

Viscount Edward Grey came out from political retirement the same week to speak on behalf of Walter Runciaman who was running on an Independent-Liberal card at Berwick on Tweed. The former Foreign Secretary criticized the Government for not making the offer to Ireland sooner; for instance, when the Southern Unionists had asked for Home Rule the year before. He pointed out one advantage the conference had over previous attempts to settle the problem of Ireland. For the first time, the Irish were dealing with the public opinion of the British people, not with a particular policy of the Government. If it were properly handled, there was a good prospect of the conference succeeding.[38]

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37 London Times, October 11, 1921, 11.

38 Times, October 11, 1921, 7.

Of course, the Morning Post was disgusted with the proceedings. Between the two parties was a gulf that could not be bridged. One side had taken an oath to a united Republican nation; the other to a monarchy which had allowed the six Protestant counties of Ulster to become a separate government guaranteed against interference. The one objective of the conference was to "put ourselves right with America" -- an odd sort of an objective for a sovereign nation. As for the men the Government were treating with, the Post compared them to a club conceived of by Thomas Quincy which consisted of dilettanti in the fine art of murder, and commented, "But we do not suppose that even under the fumes of opium his extravagant fancy ever rioted so far as to conceive of such a meeting at 10 Downing Street." That was a fiction left to a greater master, Truth.[39]

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39 Morning Post, October 12, 1921, 6.

CHAPTER IV

THE GOVERNMENT ASSUMES ITS POSITION

Prime Minister David Lloyd George opened the first Plenary Session of the Conference at 11 A.M. on the morning of October 11, 1921. He assured the delegates that if the limitations imposed upon them proved insuperable the responsibility for failure would rest not with those at the Council table but with others. Arthur Griffith's reply was reserved and cautious. He said that if there was a change in the policy of subordinating Ireland to English interests, then there appeared to be a possibility of settlement. These introductory remarks completed, the Prime Minister immediately asked the Irish to state their objections to the proposals offered De Valera on July twentieth. The military reservations they contained were essential to British security, he maintained, and the trade stipulations had been inserted only to prevent a tariff war.[1]

In an afternoon session held the same day, Griffith declined to state any objections, but asked permission to submit a re-draft of the proposals. He thought that the Irish

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1 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 144.

share of the debt should be arrived at only after computing the amount that Ireland was overtaxed during the previous century.[2] He attempted to convince the Prime Minister of the desirability of Irish neutrality, which would be impossible while the British controlled Irish ports. Lloyd George was adamant; the facilities described were wanted for British defense and were essential to it. Ireland as a Dominion could not consider herself a neutral; furthermore, theoretic neutrality was no guarantee of security.[3]

Sinn Fein violations of the Truce -- drilling of troops in Ireland and the holding of courts chartered by the Dail Eireann were the main topics of discussion at the next session of the conference which was held on October thirteenth. Only the day before, the Manchester Guardian had praised these courts and their creator, the Dail, for efficient operation. Throughout the period of guerrilla warfare in Ireland, when many of its Members were still in prisons and internment camps, the Dail had held sessions and promulgated decrees by which it attempted to carry on the work of government. So efficient was the legal system it established, that the people in Ireland had begun to take their disputes to the Dail Courts, rather than to the British law courts, it reported. Should the conference discover

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2 Ibid., 147.

3 Ibid., 148.

a solution to the age-old difficulties between Ireland and England, the Irish people would have already in existence something more than a skeleton of government according to their national aspirations.[4]

The matter of military reservations for the British navy and air force in Ireland and the Irish share of the war debt had been discussed on the first day of the conference. On the thirteenth, Richard Barton had used an impressive list of figures to show that Irish fiscal autonomy would involve no danger to British interests. If Ireland were to be permitted to build up local industries in competition with British cheap-labor products, she must be permitted to impose protective tariffs, he said.[5] Another stumbling block on the path to settlement, Ulster, came up at the next conference, held on October fourteenth.

To Arthur Griffith the idea of Ulster being a separate and distinct nation was a ridiculous as that of an independent Yorkshire. The unanimity of her religious sentiment was a myth. While the rest of Ireland had no intention of forcing Ulster to come in with her, she resented that England was not giving Ulster the opportunity of free choice. On the seventeenth, the Irish submitted their own plan for Ulster. According to this arrange-

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4 Manchester Guardian, October 12, 1921, 4.

5 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 148.

ment, the six counties granted a separate Parliament in 1920, were to be asked to surrender it, and be directly and exclusively represented in the Dublin Parliament. Should they, or a substantial number of them, refuse, the recusant areas would retain the 1920 Parliament, but overriding powers and representation in an overriding Parliament would be transferred from the Imperial Parliament to one in Dublin. Safeguards for Ulster would be outlined in an agreement between Ulster and the South.[6]

By the end of the first week of the conference, Lloyd George was disgusted by the lack of progress it showed. The Irish delegates were an impossible people, he confided to Lord Riddell, the personable newspaper editor who had often served as a liaison officer between the Government and the Press, who would come to the point, but would not come to decisions. Whether they did not want to or whether they were afraid to, he could not say. Arthur Griffith was, no doubt, the leader and Michael Collins a "considerable person", but while the moderate section of Sinn Fein wanted a settlement they were deterred by the gunmen who did not.[7]

On October eighteenth, the Irish Conference adjourned without fixing a date for the next meeting. During the week which followed, the newspapers reported two cases of the Irish asserting their sovereignty to the world. An office called the

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6 Ibid. 148-149

7 Lord Riddell's War Diary, October 16, 1921, London, 1933.322.

Irish Delegation in Madrid was issuing books and pamphlets by Irish Republican writers and was circulating a memorial addressed to "the members of the Spanish Parliament by their comrades of the Dail Eireann." The memorial, which had been translated into perfect Spanish, continued on for sixty pages recounting the destruction of two hundred and twenty-nine villages and towns in Ireland by British forces between September 9, 1919 and March 1, 1921.[8]

The second was De Valera's telegram to Pope Benedict. The Pope had sent a telegram to the King expressing his joy over the resumption of the Anglo-Irish negotiations and promising prayers that the Lord might "bless and grant to your Majesty the great joy and imperishable glory of bringing to an end the age-old dissension".[9] In reply, the King thanked the Pope, and promised to join him in prayers that the conference might initiate "a new era of peace and happiness for my people" and might achieve "a permanent settlement of the troubles in Ireland."[10] De Valera took exception to the reference to troubles in Ireland and sent a reply to the Pope himself, thanking him for his concern, but pointing out that the troubles were between England and Ireland, two separate nations, since the independence of Ireland had been proclaimed by the regularly elected representatives of Ireland

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8 Times, October 19, 1921, 9.

9 Times, October 20, 1921, 10.

10 Ibid.

and ratified by subsequent plebiscites. The source of the troubles between Ireland and Great Britain was that Britain had sought to impose her will upon Ireland and British forces had endeavored to rob the Irish people of the liberty which was their natural right and their ancient heritage.[11]

British tempers flared upon publication of De Valera's reply. The Times imagined that a telegram would fill the Pope with dismay. It was an act of impertinence towards the Pope and unmannerly to the point of churlishness towards a King whose solicitude for the Irish people needed no proof.[12] The "dark forces" were again suspected to be at work in Southern Ireland, said the British Weekly, and Mr. De Valera had obeyed the promptings of those dangerous enemies of England who formed the far left of the Sinn Fein party.[13]

While Michael Collins was in Dublin conferring with De Valera over the week-end, the rest of Ireland was described as "silent but anxious".[14] In replying to the question put to him in the House of Commons by William Davison, Lloyd George admitted that the publication of the telegram especially in the middle of the peace negotiations constituted a grave

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11 Ibid.

12 Times, October 21, 1921, 11.

13 British Weekly: a Journal of Social and Christian Progress, October 27, 1921, 75.

14 Times, October 24, 1921, 11.

challenge. He insisted that the position of the Government on questions involved in the telegram had been made "abundantly clear", and they did no propose to retreat from it.[15]

Behind Conference Room doors, the explanation made by Arthur Griffith that De Valera had only stated public facts and that the message was called for by the phrase "troubles in Ireland" in the King's letter was not rejected but the Irish delegates were supposed to state definitely at the next session how they intended to enter "freely and of their own accord within the Empire" and whether they would concede necessary facilities to secure the immunity of British shores from an attack by sea.[16]

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15 Debates, Commons CXLVIII, (October, 1921)

16 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 169.

When it came, the Irish reply was as discreet in its omissions as in what it included. It proposed that the British Government should recognize Ireland's freedom and integrity and that the United States and the League of Nations should be invited to join in that guarantee. Ireland, on her part, would bend herself to take no action, nor permit any action to be taken inconsistent with the obligation of Irish allegiance to the Crown.[17]

On the twenty-fourth of October the delegates met for the last time as a full panel; henceforth they were to work in small groups, the most vital questions to be discussed in personal conversations between the Prime Minister, Lord Birkenhead, Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins. In elaborating on the Irish reply, Griffith admitted that coming into the Empire was "not quite our idea of association,"[18] and said the Irish would accept the Crown as the head of an Association... as permanent allies. In points of concern, like peace and war, Ireland would accept the decision of the Imperial conference. Instead of common citizenship in the United Kingdom, the Irish proposed "reciprocal citizenship" whereby the citizens of Ireland would retain their Irish citizenship as the same time that

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17 Ibid., 169.

18 Ibid., 178.

they enjoyed their British citizenship.[19]

De Valera's telegram had brought the issues of supreme difficulty to the forefront in the conference: how much allegiance were the Irish prepared to give the King and how much would the settlement of Ulster under the Better Government of Ireland Act be tampered with. In Parliament, there became evident a revolt in the ranks of the Unionists who had their doubts about the continuance of negotiations not definitely based upon allegiance to the Throne and non-coercion of Ulster.[20] One of them, Colonel Gretton entered a motion of censure against the Government for treating with the Sinn Fein delegates who came as representatives of an independent nation. He admitted that there should be a conference, but not with "this gang" which the Government had described as being subsidized by foreign money and in communication with the Bolshevik Government of Russia.[21] October thirty-first was set aside for a discussion of the motion of censure by the Parliament.[22]

In the debate on the motion, defenders of the Government pointed out that conditions in Ireland had improved considerably since the Truce.[23] Concerning breaches

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19 Ibid., 179.

20 Times, October 29, 1921, 9.

21 Debates, Commons CXLVII, (October 27, 1921) 1025.

22 Debates, Commons CXLVII, (October 18, 1921) 18.

23 Debates, Commons CXLVII, (October 31, 1921) 1412.

of the Truce, the Irish delegates had acted like men of honor, Chamberlain said.[24] Lloyd George asked with whom were the Government to confer if not with Sinn Fein. All reports had shown that the sympathies of the Irish people were with these people who had been elected under an Act of Parliament.[25] Objections to the Conference, if there were any, should have been made months before, shortly after the King's Speech in Belfast.[26] Should the conference fail to reach agreement and should war come, every man would be able to go back to his constituency and say, "We are fighting for the security of the British Empire; we are fighting for the honor of Britain; we are fighting for freedom and right; we have done everything in our power to make peace and it is no fault of ours that it has not been done.[27]

Although Mr. J. Clynes might point out that if a Government's policy is wrong it must reverse it,[28] most of the small die-hard groups of Unionists who supported the motion attacked the Prime Minister for abandoning his strong-arm tactics in Ireland. As Punch humorously related

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24 Debates, Commons CXLVII, (October 31,1921) 1477.

25 Ibid., 1422.

26 Ibid., 1424.

27 Ibid., 1425.

28 Ibid., 1462.

"The Irish debate when it came resolved itself into a debate between Mr. Lloyd George of the past and Mr. Lloyd George of the present."[29]

Mr. W.M. Jellett contended that there was no need for the Government to confer with assassins; the Prime Minister should have consulted the Southern Unionists.[30] Lieutenant-Colonel H.F. Croft denied that Ireland was badly governed;[31] the pledge given Ireland in 1914 when the Home Rule Act was passed, was not applicable after the 1916 Rebellion.[32] With eloquence, he asked the Members whether they would with open eyes plunge Ireland into permanent chaos and misery in order to please the Irish Republican Brotherhood in America; or would they do their duty to their country, and emulating the example of President Lincoln, "fearlessly preserve Ireland for the British Empire."[33] His eloquence was in vain. The motion of censure against the Government was defeated four hundred and thirty-nine to forty-three.

While the Times which had welcomed the idea of a conference, rejoiced over this show of national solidarity

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29 "The Essence of Parliament", Punch or the London Charivari, CLXI (November 9, 1921), 373.

30 Debates, Commons CXLVII, (October 31, 1921), 1444.

31 Ibid., 1433.

32 Ibid., 1435.

33 Ibid., 1441.

behind Lloyd George, its correspondents suggested better solutions to the Irish troubles of the Government. According to Lord Hugh Cecil, an Irish Representative Assembly could have tried to draw up the demands of Southern Ireland in the form of a Parliamentary Bill. Should a Bill like this be amended, it might be returned to the Irish Assembly for acceptance. If every affort to come to agreement failed, there would be no alternative but to restore the Union and enforce the law. This plan, he asserted, would have the advantages of clarity, thoroughness and publicity, and would not involve treating the Irish Republican Army as honest rebels instead of what they were and are -- "a band of murderers."[36] J.G. Swift suggested that Ireland be returned to the status she held immediately after the Renunciation Act of 1782. Under this arrangement, the King of Great Britain, was de facto King of Ireland, while the two legislatures were regarded as independent, co-ordinate and in their respective spheres co-equal.[37]

In the wake of this vote of confidence given the Government, the Prime Minister met with Arthur Griffith and in exchange for a promise that he would oppose the Unionists

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36 Times, November 2, 1921, 6.

37 Times, November 5, 1921, 6. This was precisely what Griffith had first proposed for Ireland. Cf. supra, 18.

on the Ulster question, obtained a promise from the Irish leader that if satisfied on every other point of the settlement, he, personally, would recommend recognition of the Crown as Head of a proposed Association of Free States, and free partnership in the Empire, the formula for which would be arrived at later.[38]

Shortly afterwards, the Prime Minister sent his Secretary, Tom Jones, to the Irish residence with a suggestion concerning Ulster, in the event that she refused to come in with the rest of Ireland under the scheme agreed upon. If, after a short period of option, Ulster refused to join the twenty-six southern counties, an impartial boundary commission would be appointed to survey the territory and include with the South, those districts of Ulster which were nationalist. He implied that the territory left to continue under the arrangement provided for in the Better Government Act of 1920 would be so small that it would be soon economically forced in with the rest of Ireland. "Would Griffith agree in writing not to oppose such a settlement?" he asked. Such a promise would be of immense tactical value to the Prime Minister in dealing with the Unionists. Much to the distress of the other Irish delegates, Griffith agreed not to oppose

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38 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 196.

the idea of a boundary commission.[39] Lloyd George was thus freed from the obligation of obtaining a settlement acceptable to all Ireland. The Irish, or at least Arthur Griffith could not, in the future, break off negotiations because of the obstinancy of certain Ulstermen.

Appreciative of Griffith's promise, Lord Birkenhead declared that he would rather resign than use force against Sinn Fein in the event that Ulster refused a settlement.[40] Were settlement possible, Lloyd George vowed that he would not continue the Irish War. He would resign and the King would have to send for someone else.[41] Churchill opposed resignation. They must either go through with the legislation and persevere until either they had been dismissed from power, had reached a settlement, or had reopened hostilities in a new form.[42]

In keeping with his side of the bargain -- to work for the essential unity of Ireland, Lloyd George next sent for Sir James Craig and presented him with the terms of a possible settlement which he agreed to put before the Ulster

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39 Ibid., 207-208.

40 Ibid., 216.

41 Riddell, Intimate Diary of the Peace Conference and Afterwards, London, 1933, 330.

42 Churchill, The Aftermath, 305.

Cabinet on November ninth.[43] This Cabinet refused the proposals as unacceptable, approved the firm attitude Craig had taken in refusing to concede any power or any territory that Ulster had been given in the Government of Ireland Act in 1920.[44] On the eleventh, they dispatched counter-proposals to the Prime Minister[45] which their British counterparts returned four days later terming them inadequate.[46]

Meanwhile, in Belfast, a mass meeting was held, and a telegram was sent to Craig congratulating him and resolving that the liberties of Ulster were safe in his hands. In the York Street district of the city, rival crowds stoned each other. Attacks on Catholics leaving Church services and their jobs at the shipyards became frequent and Unionist reported the re-assembling of the Ulster Volunteers, first orgainized against Home Rule in 1912.[47]

The Belfast activities alarmed the English people. In an editorial entitled "Ulster's Opportunity" the editor of the Times urged the Ulster Unionists to reconsider their position and agree to a settlement, should Southern Ireland

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43 Times, November 7, 1921, 10.

44 Times, November 10, 1921, 10.

45 Manchester Guardian, November 11, 1921, 9.

46 Guardian, November 15, 1921, 12.

47 Guardian, Novemberll, 1921,9.

and Great Britain come to terms.[48] Were Northern Ireland and Southern Ireland united under a joint Parliament, a constitutional recognition of the right of either to veto its legislation would provide the best and most natural safeguard for Ulster.[49]

Speaking at the Lord Mayor's banquet in London, Lloyd George admitted that Britain and Ireland and its northeast corner had differences of temperament, trade and interests which would have to be accomodated. The success of the conference would depend on all parties being prepared to give and take.[50] His Majesty, proroguing the Parliament on November tenth, maintained that it was his firm belief and earnest prayer that with forbearance and good will and with an honest resolve to tread the paths of oblivion and forgiveness, an enduring peace would finally be achieved.[51] In the critical circumstances of the hour, it would be well to accept the Royal Appeal as a Royal Command, thought the Times.

The Guardian was certain that it would be accepted. "There has now to be peace" was the first and the last word of the Government. This great change which had come over the whole

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48 Guardian, November 11, 1921, 9.

49 Times, November 8, 1921, 13.

50 Times, November 4, 1921, 11.

51 Times , November 10, 1921, 10.

mind of Great Britain and of its governing men had been long-preparing. It was part of the inevitable reaction against the violence of war, of a growing sense of the futility of violence. Even while the Terror was in full blast, all that was best in the mind of the country recoiled from its shameful excesses. The people were utterly weary of its folly and futility. Under no circumstances could it be resumed.[52]

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52 Guardian, November 12, 1921, 9.

CHAPTER FIVE

" THERE HAS NOW TO BE PEACE "

"There has now to be peace", and "all parties must give and take" were the themes around which developed the drama of the last three critical weeks. It was the Irish turn to concede first at the Conference, and Griffith had agreed in writing not to oppose the British suggestion of a boundary commission and not to break off negotiations on the Ulster issue.[1] On November sixteenth, a draft treaty was submitted to the Irish delegation which provided that after a six to twelve month option period had elapsed, such a commission would survey Ulster and decide, after considering the wishes of the inhabitants, which sections of that province would prefer to join with the rest of Ireland. No oath was included in this document, nor was there a mention of allegiance to the Crown. Ireland was assured the status of a Dominion, but was not labelled one. Some defense, trade, and financial concessions were made.[2]

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1 Cf. supra, 80.

2 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 209.

The same day that the Irish received the draft treaty, the Prime Minister had a conference with Lord Midleton, head of the Southern Irish Unionists. This group wanted to preserve the Anglo-Irish Union but had accepted the Sinn Fein Government because they had confidence in its administration of justice and local life.[3] The outcome of their discussion was never published; news of the meeting was overlooked by the Times and the Manchester Guardian which, that week, were devoting most of their headline space to the meeting of the Unionist Party Conference in Liverpool. There, Colonel Gretton, whose motion of censure against the Government had been defeated in the House of Commons three weeks before, had announced his intention to submit a resolution to the Conference condemning the Government for negotiating with Sinn Fein at all.[4] The next few days were expected to determine just how strong was the block the Ulster Unionists were attempting to throw in the path of an Irish settlement.

On the eve of the Conference, Lord Birkenhead left for Liverpool to appeal to the local Unionist, Joseph Salvidge, to use his powers of leadership to do everything within

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3 Manchester Guardian, November 17, 1921, 11.

4 Ibid., 5.

his power to secure the approval of the Conference for a settlement within Ireland. Salvidge had already decided in his own mind that a settlement, however against Unionist tenents it might be, was in the best interests of all concerned.[5] After Gretton had submitted his resolution to the Conference, Salvidge proposed an amendment affirming that " consistent with the supremacy of the Crown, the security of the Empire, and the pledges given Ulster and safeguards of the interests of the minority in the South of Ireland," a solution of the Irish difficulties might be found in the London Conference.[6]

Birkenhead and Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, one of the "other men" on the British negotiating team pledged that no settlement would be made without these conditions mentioned in the Salvidge amendment.[7] Their speeches helped convince the Party Conference and the Salvidge amendment was accepted. Unfortunately these same speeches committed the Government to promise that very definite conditions would be included in any forthcoming agreement.[8]

As the Liverpool Conference drew to a close, both

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5 Salvidge of Liverpool; Behind the Political Scene, 1890-1928, London, 1934, 225-226.

6 Ibid., 228.

7 Manchester Guardian, November 8, 1921, 10.

8 Ibid.

the Manchester Guardian and the London Times felt that Ulster should remember that Great Britain and the Commonwealth had claims, too, and should seize the opportunity to be a peace-maker. The country was horrified at the prospect of what might happen if peace were not found, and it was certain that at the General Election which would presumably precede the new war against Ireland there would be many condidates prepared to advocate as an alternative a treatment of Ulster which was not at the moment thinkable.[9]

An Ireland within the Empire, with real and effective protection of minorities was an ideal almost too good to be true, and there was no time like the present to try such a settlement.[10] Yet, Aberdeen and Temair pointed out in a letter to the editor of the Times , the Ulsterites were prepared not only to plunge Ireland into the throes of war and misery, but to jeopardize and more than jeopardize the security and welfare of the British Empire and regions beyond it. A people naturally so intelligent could hold such an impracticable position only because British authorities had constantly flattered these members of the Orange party

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9 Times, November 18, 1921, 9.

10 Times , November 19, 1921, 4; a letter from Ellis Hume-Williams to the editor entitled "The Liverpool Conference -- and After".

and yielded to them in words and deeds to such an extent that a sense of superiority and self-righteousness had been created which in turn produced a blindness of vision fatal to a clear and just judgment on their part.[11]

By the end of the month, news of another conference, the Washington Conference was making headlines and a speedy settlement of the Irish question was looked upon as one way of gaining international praise and respect. Lord Birkenhead reminded members of the Aldwich Club on November 23, 1921, what a relief it would be if a conclusion were reached in the Irish discussions according to which Ireland would remain as a free partner in the free British Empire. The international atmosphere would clear up considerably, especially the sphere of Anglo-American relations.[12]

The same afternoon, Birkenhead, Sir Gordon Hewart, and the Irish delegates, met to discuss what degree of association there would be between Great Britain and Ireland and what guarantees could be arranged for Ulster with respect to an all-Ireland Parliament.[13] Sir James Craig

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11 Times, November 22, 1921, 5.

12 Manchester Guardian, November 23, 1921, 10.

13 Manchester Guardian, November 26, 1921, 8.

came to London the next day to receive new peace proposals from the Government.[14]

Back in Belfast, Craig submitted the proposals to the Ulster Cabinet which rejected them as "utterly impossible".[15] The Prime Minister then told the Parliament that by the next Tuesday Lloyd George would have sent him new proposals for consideration or the peace negotiations would have broken down. Meanwhile Ulster would not be compromised, he assured them.[16]

Alarm was growing in England of a considerable degree over published reports of the progress of Ulster Volunteer units.,[17] those which had first been organized in 1913 to oppose the establishment of Irish Home Rule in the North-east of Ireland, in reforming themselves. On November ninth, a circular had appeared over the signature of Colonel Wickham, Divisional Commander of the Royal Irish Constabulary in Belfast formulating plans for the establishing of a kind of guerrilla soldiery in regular military units. The wording of the circular left no reasonable doubt that the force was to be an organization of anti-peace partisans, and that it had in view some sort of Civil War,

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14 Times, November 22, 1921,10.

15 Manchester Guardian, November 30, 1921,7.

16 Times , November 30, 1921, 10.

preparations for which were nightly raids and bomb-throwing expeditions made on the Catholic sections of Belfast and attacks on the same religious minority in Ulster when they came from church services or their jobs in the shipyards.[18]

The admission of Ulster Prime Minister Craig that he "approved" the Wickham shocked the editor of the Guardian and he declared that when Sir James Craig went almost directly from his interview with Lloyd George to stab peace in the back, he was acting solely "on his own remarkable standards of public conduct.", with no approval from the British Government.[19] Military reinforcements arrived in Belfast on the twenty-fifth, and in view of the sectarian nature of Craig's message affirming his approval of the Wickham circular, reprisals against the Catholics were feared. Impartial police work was urgently needed, he insisted.[20]

Both the Guardian and the Times mentioned the necessity of a minority accepting the principle upon which public opinion decides. The Guardian recalled that in the past when a constitutional struggle had reached a climax in which the minority could resist only by physical force

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17 Manchester Guardian, November 25, 1921, 6.

18 Ibid., 7; November 26, 1921, 9.

19 Manchester Guardian, November 25, 1921, 6.

20 Manchester Guardian, November 26, 1921, 9.

it had been recognized that the minority must accept what public opinion had decided on in principle and then confer on the methods of its application to themselves.[21] The Times thought that were Ulster's future ultimately determined by the constituencies themselves, the electorate would not be deeply affected either by the commitments of politicians or internal considerations of party welfare, but would vote upon what they themselves considered the vital issues at stake. Once the case for Ulster cooperation in Irish affairs was clearly stated to the country, Ulster would not be judged upon the assumption that every claim she made was justified, but upon the real merits of the plea she was making.[22]

On November twenty-sixth, Lord Birkenhead spoke for an hour before a mass meeting of Conservatives and Unionists on the subject of the Irish Conference -- its raison d'etre, its difficulties, the tentative solution of the Irish problem and the desirability of immediate and permanent peace in Ireland. The Lord Chancellor summed up the state of Ireland before the King's Speech to the Belfast Parliament in a remarkable ninety-three word opening sentence:

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21 Manchester Guardian, November 24, 1921, 8.

22 Times, November 25, 1921, 11.

> When the invitation was given the representatives of Southern Ireland, there was in the South of Ireland a population which we had failed to reconcile, despite repeated ... attempts and there was in progress before our eyes a course of attempted repression which besides involving this country in great expenditure, also -- and this was more serious -- involved constant bloodshed on both sides and was adding to the legacy of distrust and bitterness which has been the sad and recurring note of our relations with Ireland for centuries.[23]

After the response to the King's Speech (for which the Ministers were responsible) it became plain, he said, that representatives of the South and West of Ireland were prepared to discuss a settlement to the quarrel. The entry of the British Government into a conference with them was later approved by the House of Commons, the Liverpool Conference of the Unionist Party and the press of Great Britain and the Empire.[24]

While it was not possible to give any information on the current stage of the negotiations, Birkenhead assured his listeners that the Government had not any intention of applying coercion to Ulster, and there was no question of withdrawing from her any special privileges or those powers given her by an Act of Parliament the year before. He hoped that in the near future Ulster would realize that

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23 Reprinted in the Times, November 28, 1921,5.

24 Ibid.

her interests would be better served in those matters that concerned Ireland as a whole by contributing to an all-Ireland assembly all that she possessed of experience and political and commercial knowledge; that a compromise might be reached by which Ulster might exercise an option as to whether or not she chose to come under a central authority for matters affecting Ireland as a whole, while retaining all special privileges and powers conferred on her by the Act of 1920.

The Government had been dealing with representatives of the most extreme side of a party who had been reared in an atmosphere of grievances, some real, some imaginary, and was attempting a reconciliation where profound differences of religions existed. Under no circumstances would Ireland be permitted to secede from the British Empire, but she was offered in name and substance the position of a great self-governing Dominion. She would be in the same position as Canada except for limitations arising from reservations concerning tariffs and British use of harbor facilities. Her citizens would be masters of their own destinies in all that concerned themselves, but united with the citizens of Great Britain by the link of the Crown, "the simple and necessary symbol of Union."[25]

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25 Ibid.

Whether the Conference accepted this settlement or not, Birkenhead hoped that the terms would bepublished since immense gains in the struggle for peace would be made if the proposals were recognized as fair. The only hope for a civilized and economic restoration of the world was to be found in the growing friendship and cooperation of the United States and the British Empire, and never had there been a moment in the history of these two mighty powers when there had not been a tendency to embitter relations by reason of Irish influence. There would be no difficulty in obtaining cooperation between the two nations as existed during the World War but for some Anglo-Irish relations. In making the present attempt to settle the Irish Question the object the Government had in mind and never forgot, was the welfare of Ireland, and their own country and the maintenance of the Empire.[26]

Three days later, speaking before the British Overseas Banks Association, Winston Churchill maintained he could not see how any man could hope to gain any advantage or satisfaction from a renewal of the bloody and shameful welter from which Britain had but recently emerged.[27]

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26 Ibid.

27 Manchester Guardian, November 30, 1921, 10.

The obstinancy of the Ulsterites might bring about a war in Ireland which would drive countless wedges into the ranks of the Army and public service throughout the Empire, commented the Press in their articles on the speeches of Members of the Government. In the great towns throughout the Empire, the issue of the struggle would be treated by serious people as a matter for bitter civil dissensions and by the frivolous as if it were the issue of the Derby in which no one was bound to back anything. The rest of the world would probably hold the British up to contempt and dislike and compare the Irish campaigns to those of Turkey against Armenia.[28]

Meetings between the "Big Four" of the Conference delegates -- Lloyd George, Birkenhead, Griffith and Collins -- continued during the last week of November. On the twenty-fifth, the Irish reported that the Dail Eireann had agreed external association was the limit of Irish recognition of the Crown.By their way of compromise, they would vote an annual sum to the Civil List.[29] The British insisted that this was not sufficient, but they promised to insert into the proposed treaty any phrase that would insure that the Crown in Ireland would be no more in actual practice than it was in Canada

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28 Manchester Guardian, November 28, 1921, 6.

29 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 243-244.

or in other Dominions, despite the proximity of England and Ireland.[30] Despite this promise, the draft treaty which the Irish delegates took back to Dublin on December third was similar to the treaty that they had been given on November sixteenth, except for a provision which made it possible for Ireland to guard her own defenses.[31]

There was a sharp split within the Dail Cabinet over the signing of the treaty. Finally, the majority ruled that the Oath of Allegiance as it stood could not be accepted. The delegates were to resubmit their own proposals and announce in London that the Dail Cabinet was prepared to face the consequences should England declare war.[32] Only a few days before, President De Valera had hinted at the possibility of war when he told a group that he was addressing in the West of Ireland that they should be prepared to suffer more.[33]

As instructed, the Irish delegates again submitted their proposals -- in essence, external association without an Oath of Allegiance -- and had them rejected. They were promised that should they sign the British draft treaty immediately, a special session of Parliament might be

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30 Ibid., 255.

31 Ibid., 267.

32 Ibid., 269.

33 Manchester Guardian, December 30, 1921, 9.

called and a ratifying act passed before Christmas. At that point Gavan Duffy made a slip by remarking, "Our difficulty is coming within the Empire."[34] On this the British were willing to quit and a final session was called between all delegates for the next day, Monday, December fifth. It is well to recall here that Sir James Craig had told the Ulster Parliament that by Tuesday, December sixth, he would have a new draft treaty in his hands and if not, the negotiations would have broken down.

"Monday was a critical and a strenuous day in the Irish negotiations."[35] At ten in the morning, the King saw Lloyd George and at eleven-fifteen the British negotiators met. Three-quarters of an hour later there was a Cabinet meeting which terminated only shortly before the final scheduled meeting of the Peace Conference. The Conference itself was in parts, the second one closing early Tuesday morning.[36]

As the Conference session opened, the Prime Minister made a short speech on the significance of the meeting room at Number Ten Downing Street to Anglo-Irish

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34 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 270.

35 Manchester Guardian, December 6, 1921, 7.

36 Ibid.

relations. Here Pitt's Act of Union and the Home Rule Bills were discussed, as were the decisions to use a battering ram and torch, and to throw Irish tenants out of their houses, and the Bill which made every Irishman lord and master of his own house at the expense of the British Treasury.[37] He and the other British delegates were convinced that their side had gone to the limit of concession. No British statesman could face the assembly of his countrymen if he appended his signature to a convention that placed Ireland outside the British Empire, or freed her from that bond of union which was represented by a common fealty to the Sovereign, yet the Prime Minister realized that it was not easy to interpret the potency of that invisible bond to someone brought up to venerate another system of government.[38]

He got straight to the point and told the Irish that they must settle and sign the agreement or quit the Conference. Should the agreement be rejected both sides would then be free to wage whatever warfare they could against each other.[39] As the afternoon

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37 Lloyd George, Is It Peace?, 270.

38 Ibid.

39 Churchill, The Aftermath, 305.

wore on, however, the Prime Minister began to yield certain concessions to Ireland. In the draft treaty "British Commonwealth of Nations" was substituted for "British Empire" and "do swear" for "swear". Ireland was promised a Navy, full fiscal autonomy and the right to impose tariffs. On the question of Ulster, Lloyd George would not give an inch.[40]

A dramatic lull came in the proceedings and the Prime Minister handed Griffith a document dated November thirteenth. He asked Griffith if he had agreed to the contents. The Irish leader stared at the paper and said simply,"I said I would not let you down and I won't." In answer to further inquiry, Griffith maintained that even if all the other Irish delegates refused, he would still sign the treaty rather than break over the question of Ulster.[41]

After this reply, the British secretaries quickly drew up copies of the agreement for signature. Michael Collins asked for a few hours for the Irish to consider the proposals and promised a reply by nine o'clock. They left at seven-thirty with the parting warning of Lloyd George ringing in their ears, "War can be resumed

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40 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 291-296.

41 Ibid., 296.

in three days."[42] Although none of the Irish representatives left a record of what went on during the next few hours, it is understandable how tense the atmosphere was at their Hans Place residence. Three of them were urging that the instructions given by the Dail Cabinet only two days before be completely rejected and that the agreement be signed without its being submitted to Dublin.[43]

The British went off gloomily and drummed their heels. They had some food while they discussed plans for the next election campaign. None of them expected that anyone but Griffith would sign and what validity would his solitary signature possess?[44]

Nine o'clock passed but the Irish did not return. Ten. Eleven, and they were still not back. The British doubted whether they should see the Irish again. Then a message came from the Secretary of the Irish delegation that they were on their way to Downing Street. When they marched in Lloyd George noted that it was clear from their faces they had come to "a great decision" after prolonged struggle.[45]

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42 Austen Chamberlain, Down the Years, London, 1935, 241.

43 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 305.

44 Churchill, The Aftermath, 307.

45 Lloyd George, Is It Peace?, 273.

They arrived after eleven o'clock and announced that they were prepared to sign the Articles of Agreement but there remained but a few matters of detail. Quite readily the British agreed that the King's Representative in Ireland could be called any title with the exception of President; that the word "local" would be struck from the phrase "military defense force"; that provision for an Ulster militia be fitted into a clause under the terms of which the two parts of Ireland were to arrange between themselves safeguards for Ulster; and that the Southern Irish Parliament would be called by the Provisional Government of Ireland to which the British Government would transfer all necessary powers.[46]

In its final form, the Articles of Agreement declared that Ireland was to have "the same constitutional status in the Community of Nations known as the British Empire as the Dominion of Canada, the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zeland and the Union of South Africa."[47] She was to be known as the Irish Free State and have a Parliament to make laws for her peace,

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46 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 306.

47 Articles of Agreement, Article I, published in British State Papers, 1921, CXIV, compiled by Edward Parks, London, 1924.

order and good government. Her Executive was to be responsible to that Parliament. Subject to specifically named reservations, her status was guaranteed to be equal to that of Canada in law and practice as well as in constitutional usage.

The Members of the Irish Parliament were to swear "true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of the Irish Free State" and faithfulness to the King and his heirs and successors by law, "in virtue of the common citizenship of Ireland with Great Britain and her adherence to and membership in that group of nations forming the British Commonwealth of Nations."[48] The Free State Parliament was to have power to elect Members to a Council of Ireland should such a Council be established, as provided for in the Act of 1920.[49]

The powers of the Government of the Irish Free State were not to apply to Northern Ireland until one month after the passing of the English Act ratifying the Treaty. If within that month the Northern Parliament expressed a wish for exclusion, Northern Ireland was to

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48 Ibid., Article 4.

49 Ibid., Article 13.

become excluded from the Irish Free State and keep its powers under the Act of 1920. If exclusion were decided upon, a boundary commission was to determine the boundary of Northern Ireland.[50]

The Irish Free State assumed liability for the public debt of the United Kingdom and for war pensions in such proportion as might be deemed equitable, any counter-claim by Ireland being taken into consideration.[51] The naval and coastal defense of Ireland was to be undertaken by Imperial Forces, however the Free State might provide for protection of its revenue and fisheries.[52] After five years a commission of British and Irish Government representatives would review the defense provisions with a view to Ireland's undertaking a share of her own coastal defense.

The British Government was given certain harbors and other facilities for use in time of peace; during wartime or time of strained relations, the Government might take whatever it might require. The defense force of the Irish Free State was to be limited in numbers according to the

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50 Ibid., article 11.

51 Ibid., article 5.

52 Ibid., article 6.

population.[53] Other Articles concerned ports, payment of pensions, religious and educational freedom and the transference of powers from the British Government, legalizing of the Treaty and possible arrangements between the Northern Government and the Government of the rest of Ireland.

The Articles of Agreement were signed by weary men of both sides; the British with a sense of relief; the Irish with a feeling of failure and anxiety. Lloyd George imagined that as Griffith and Collins signed, they saw the shadow of their own doom clouding over the fateful paper. They knew that the pen that affixed their signatures signed their own death warrants.[54] Griffith saw beyond his own fall Ireland rising out of her troubles a free nation and that was sufficient for him. Collins was not appalled by the spectre of death but he had the Irishman's fear of encountering the charge that so readily comes to the lips of the oppressed -- that of having succumbed to the

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53 Ibid., Article 8.

54 On June 27, 1922, Civil War broke out in Ireland. The strain of conducting government under such circumstances was too much for Griffith, then President of the Free State and he collapsed and died in August of the same year, while enroute to his office. A few days later, while directing the attack on anti-Treaty forces in southwestern Ireland, Collins was ambushed and killed.

alien wile and of having betrayed one's country.[55]

Seeing Collins halt, Lloyd George addressed his appeal to an effort to demonstrate how the Treaty gave Ireland more than O'Connell and Parnell had ever hoped for and how Collins' countrymen would ever be grateful to him not only for the courage which had won such an offer, but for the wisdom that had accepted it as well.[56] After the signing had been completed, Austen Chamberlain enthusiastically expressed a hope that the two delegations might together have laid the foundation of a permanent understanding and lasting friendship between the two peoples. As the Irish delegates rose to leave, the British ministers, for the first time, shook their hands.[57]

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55 Lloyd George, Is It Peace?, 274.

56 Ibid.

57 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 310; taken from Chamberlain's notes of the Conference.

CHAPTER SIX

REACTIONS TO THE ARTICLES: DECEMBER, 1921

The British delegates had signed the agreement with a feeling of relief; the Irish with apprehension. At the present time the Treaty was the best that could be gotten, felt Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins and it was a base upon which to work for the greater freedom and unity of Ireland. They were well-aware that the Treaty was completely objectionable to many Irish leaders, including President Eamon De Valera. Three days after he received the document, De Valera made a public statement denouncing it and urging that the Members of the Dail reject it.[1]

Despite the statement given by their President, Griffith and Collins continued to point out that the Treaty did have advantages and they worked with the Unionist minority in Southern Ireland to enlist their support of it. Griffith agreed to draw up a scheme which would give the Unionists full representative power in both Chambers of the Irish Parliament.[2] The Manchester Guardian published a long

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1 Manchester Guardian, December 9, 1921,5.

2 Manchester Guardian, December 8, 1921,7.

article by Michael Collins entitled "Ireland as the Pivot of a League of Nations", in which he pictured Ireland, a separate nation kept subject by a more powerful neighbor now prepared to enter into an alliance with that neighbor who now recognized her nationhood and wished to be associated with her for their mutual benefit.[3] He regarded as the only satisfactory association for Ireland to enter, one based on the real position which the Dominions claimed and had, in fact, secured. In the interest of the associated States and above all in the interest of England, it was essential that the present de facto position should be recognized as de jure and that all its implications as regards sovereignty, allegiance and independence of the member Governments should be acknowledged. America, he felt, might be willing to enter such a league. By doing so she would be on the way to securing a world ideal of free, equal and friendly nations on which her aspirations were so firmly fixed.[4]

The British leaders who discussed the Treaty,

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3 Michael Collins, "Ireland as a Pivot of a League of Nations", Manchester Guardian, December 7, 1921,6.

4 Ibid.

saw no such visions of world freedom through association. To them, it was "a treaty drawn up equally on terms" 5 whose merits were: positively, that it laid broad the basis and lines upon which there might be built up and cemented a solid fabric of liberty for the self-government of Ireland ; and negatively, that it was "the only practicable escape from a renewal of strife in the environment of old antipathies and the reopening in the worst shapes and forms of the tragedies of civil war."[6] And many were grateful for that. As the Archbishop of Canterbury said, "Having steadily invoked for our counsellors perseverance, wisdom, and courage, today we add thanksgiving to our prayers." 7

Austen Chamberlain told a meeting of voters at the Birmingham Town Hall that while securing all the essential conditions of national and imperial security, of common citizenship and common allegiance, the agreement gave Ireland the status of a free state in the Empire of

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5 Viscount Grey to the Reform Club, December 13, 1921, Manchester Guardian, December 21, 1921,9.

6 Asquith at a meeting of the Liberal and Radical Association in Northhampton, December 14, 1921, Manchester Guardian, December 21, 1921,9.

7 Manchester Guardian, December 8, 1921, 11.

free states and equal status with the other nations of which the Empire was composed. He appealed especially to the men of Ulster to see its desirability, and accept the Treaty.[8] His appeal was timely, since Sir James Craig, the Prime Minister of Ulster, had already declared he intended to see Lloyd George about the "ambiguity of the document." He was determined to oppose an all-Ireland Parliament and anything else that might take away from Ulster any of the concessions granted her by the Act of 1920.[9]

The Morning Post shared the sentiments of Prime Minister Craig. The Articles of Agreement were described as "the most disastrous blunder ever committed by a British Government";[10] they were "an abandonment and betrayal of British powers and British friends in Ireland." Most of the other journals looked upon the settlement with approving eyes.

Reason had prevailed, said the Daily Mail, and only time would reveal how much the Agreement would benefit dwellers on both sides of the Irish Sea.[11] It was a

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8 Manchester Guardian, December 7, 1921,10.

9 Manchester Guardian, December 8, 1921, 10.

10 London Morning Post, November 29, 1922, 7.

11 London Morning Post, December 8, 1921,5.

good thing that a people so gifted as the Irish were coming into the councils of the Empire.[12] It was even better that Great Britain could now end her policy of aggression which had brought into being "an age of discontent and distrust".[13] Punch depicted "Saint David Supplementing the Work of Saint Patrick", driving out of Ireland the last of the snakes, including a huge one labelled "Mistrust."[14]

Magazine articles published in 1922 on the Treaty were about as far away from holding a neutral position as was possible. Landmark, the organ of the English Speaking Union, found that the Irish settlement was one which had with the passing of each subsequent week won an ever increasing measure of approval. The vast majority of British and Irish people believed that when Lloyd George affixed his signature to the peace treaty, a new era was ushered in, wherein the chief obstacle to British-American understanding had been removed.[15]

Despite the criticisms from men whose political records commanded respect, it must be admitted, said the lead editorial in the January, 1922 issue of the Empire Review

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12 London Times, December 7, 1921,9.

13 Times, December 8, 1921,11.

14 Punch, December 14, 1921,471.

15 Landmark, February, 1922,80.

said that the Irish settlement had met with the approval of all concerned; it was as universal as it was heartfelt. Troubles in Ireland were not over and there were many chances of misunderstanding in the future, yet it felt that in the agreement arrived at "after so many hours of anxious thought and consultation," there shone out the first glimmerings of peace.[16]

Peace in Ireland and the cessation of strife were urgent and necessary at the time. In England, more men were out of work than ever before. Half of Europe could not produce the food and materials for which the other half was dying. To refuse to make the greatest contribution that was within their power, for the furtherance of peace, would not only be foolhardy for the British people, it would even be a crime.[17]

On the other hand, an article by Professor J.G.Swift Mac Neill, K.C., in the Contemporary Review the same month declared the settlement had won only temporary relief from troubles in Ireland and had caused the English people to lose faith in the public utterances of their leaders.[18]

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16 Empire Review, the Journal of British Trade, XXXVI, January, 1921, 1-2

17 Ibid.

18 J.G. Swift Mac Neill, "Peace in Ireland", Contemporary Review, CXXI, January, 1922, 2.

In February, the Review carried an article by Lord Crewe entitled "Ireland and the Articles of Agreement", which contended that the Irish people no longer looked upon the great Republicans and Nationalists of the past like Esmond Grattan, Daniel O'Connell and Charles Stewart Parnell as heroes, but were content only to burn incense before the altar of Wolfe Tone.[19] To his way of thinking, the Articles of Agreement offered dangerous possibilities to the Irish leaders, the foremost of whom, Eamon De Valera, was evidently no more fitted to guide a nation along the road to constructive freedom than a Sir Harry Vane or Robbespierre.

On December fourteenth, Parliament was called in special session in order that the Articles of Agreement might be submitted for its approval.[20] In his speech from the throne, the King expressed an earnest wish that by the Treaty, strife of centuries would be ended and that

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19 Leader of the rebellion of 1798 and the first to advocate separation along with independence for Ireland.

20 Debates, Lords XLVIII, (December 14, 1921) 3. An avowed Home-Ruler, Morley was formerly Chief-Secretary for Ireland.

Ireland as a free partner in the Commonwealth of Nations would secure the fufillment of her national ideals.[21]

In moving the vote of thanks in the House of Lords, Viscount Morley commented that enormous numbers of people throughout England and Ireland, even those who did not favor the Agreement shared in a feeling of heartfelt joy that centuries of misrule in Ireland had been ended. The administration of Ireland had been the naked government of another Kingdom by irresponsible force. Coercive laws were passed and were smoothly described as being for the protection of life and property, of respect for ordinary law and so on. All these methods proved an ugly failure.[22]

The Earl of Dunraven who seconded the motion of Viscount Morley called the Articles of Agreement, "a great measure of renunciation and reconciliation."[23] He insisted that the Irish people had to be trusted. "If you trust them at all", he told the Lords, "it will be wise to trust them all in all.... Give the people of Ireland a fair chance to make good", and they could and would make good.[24] Some

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21 Ibid., 4.

22 Ibid., 13. Dunraven was of Irish lineage back to the third century. He was a federalist and in 1918 for an all-Ireland Parliament proposed at the Irish Convention.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid., 14.

resentment was to be expected from the Irish Unionists of Ulster, but it should be possible to carry out the general terms of the Agreement in a manner which should do no harm to their real interests, to their loyalty or to their sentiments on any civil or religious subject.[25]

Lord C urzon saw nothing sinister in the title "Irish Free State" proposed in the Agreement for the southern counties of Ireland.[26] He took pains to show that the signing of the Agreement was not an attempt to put something over on Parliament. The document required the approval of both Houses as well as that of the Dail E ireann. According to the provisions of Article Seventeen, the British Government was to set up a Provisional Government in Ireland while an Irish Constitution was being drafted.[27] The Privy Council remained as the final court of appeal in Ireland, and if any individual in Ireland should feel his or her rights in respect to religion or religious education infringed upon by a feature of a future law passed in Ireland, the remedy lay in the Privy Council.[28]

Most of the Conservative-Unionists supported the

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25 Ibid., 18.

26 Ibid., 24.

27 Ibid., 25.

28 Ibid.,

Agreement; but the Irish Unionists in the House of Lords, especially the Ulstermen, considered themselves deserted and cast aside without a single line of recognition in the whole of the "so-called treaty."[29] According to Lord Sumner never had such an outrage been attempted on constitutional liberty. There was a lie on the face of the Agreement; it was not a treaty with all-Ireland, merely an agreement with the southern counites of Ireland.[30] To call it a treaty was a misnomer, since a treaty could be made only with an independent nation, and Ireland, despite the declaration of the Dail, was not the independent republic it purported to be.[31]

Only a few of the Peers attacked the Agreement; but they were bitter in their opposition. Lord Sydenham pronounced it a surrender on the question of the Oath, the Army and Navy.[32] How far had outrage and crime in Ireland been responsible for what constituted an amazing change in the opinion of those who had hitherto been consistently opposed to any policy based upon the lines suggested in the Agreement? [33]wondered the Marquis of Londonderry. Only a few months before the same

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29 Ibid., 38.

30 Ibid., 46.

31 Ibid., 165.

32 Ibid., 143-144.

33 Ibid., 61.

Government had denounced as rank lunacy what they were now regarding as the highest expression of statesmanship, Lord Buckmaster said.[34] Accepting the plan of the Government of Ireland Act in 1920 had been a sacrifice for Ulster. "Regardless of what plan of administration the Government, with the support of the British people might make with the southern counties of Ireland, Ulster could allow nothing more than a modified form of the Union of 1920," said the Marquis of Londonderry, an Ulsterman, himself.[35]

The Duke of Northumberland proposed that an amendment be added to the vote of thanks to the King for his speech, stating that the House of Lords regretted that the proposed settlement would involve a surrender of rights of the Crown in Ireland, would give power to establish an independent Irish Army and Navy and would not safeguard the rights of the Loyalist population in Southern Ireland.[36] He feared that a powerful Ireland would be a dangerous example to the other British possessions. "Let Ghandi in India and Anghul in Egypt once obtain the position that De Valera has occupied in Ireland and the game is in their hands," he warned.[37]

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34 Ibid., 54.

35 Ibid., 67.

36 Ibid., 84.

37 Ibid., 92.

The form of the Agreement was also attacked. When concessions were offered Ireland, they should be in the form of an amendable bill, not in a treaty.[38] Would the Irish Constitution be submitted for the sanction of Parliament? Lord Middleton wanted to know.[39] Some arrangements would have to be made to bring the South closer in its relations with Great Britain.[40]

As the defenders of the treaty resumed their case the next day, the Earl of Donoughmore told the Peers that to approve the Agreement was to vote for a chance at peace.[41] The treaty was the alternative to a state of affairs with which the Government had made it plain they were "absolutely incompetent to deal with", said the Earl of Wicklow.[42] The Oath should bring Ireland into a closer Union with England, others felt, including Lord Monteagle of Brandon.[43] It was in the best interests of the Empire, and long-deferred justice to Ireland as well,

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38 Ibid., 80.

39 Ibid., 83.

40 Ibid., 82.

41 Ibid.,122.

42 Ibid., 132.

43 Ibid., 156.

The attack on the Treaty was clever, persevering and passionately voiced by men who had given their political lives in support of the cause of Union. They were decisively defeated in the division, one hundred and sixty-five to forty-seven.[49]

The vote of thanks for the Kings Speech waw moved in the House of Commons by Sir Samuel Hoare. He cited the Articles of Agreement as the only measure which would have brought peace in a quarrel so deep-rooted and so deadly.[50] They were not a surrender. Britain was so strong a nation she could make big and generous concessions such as no small and weak country would dare to make. She could invite Ireland to come into the British Commonwealth as a full partner and take her place at the Round Table of the Empire's governors.[51]

The House of Commons should realize that the most difficult task before the Irish Free State was the consolidation of a new and stable government after centuries of agitation and unrest, and should not make the task of men of good will more difficult.[52] Ulster was free to choose the path which she would take; he hoped that she would see fit to come in with the rest of Ireland.[53]

49 Ibid.

50 Debates, Commons CIL (December 14, 1921), 9.

51 Ibid., 10

52 Ibid., 11

53 Ibid., 12

As a Conservative, Sir Samuel welcomed the hope for reconciliation between the English Conservatives and a people who reverenced history, tradition and religion. As a Unionist, he felt that the Union "which we have tried honestly to maintain is being transmitted into a union of purer essence."[54]

Speeches seconding the motion of thanks mentioned the right of Irishmen to live in their own country, in their own way and under their own form of government.[55] Mr. G. Barnes regarded the treaty as a satisfactory conclusion of the pledge made by the Government during its election campaign in 1918: to seek a peace with Ireland on the basis of self-government contingent upon only two reservations -- the non-separation of Ireland and the non-coercion of Ulster.[56] Mr. A. C lynes who had headed the investigating committee sent by the Labor Party into Ireland a year before said the Articles of Agreement were the only way for union between Great Britain and Ireland.[57] If political leaders would but exhibit courage they could go for reconciling their followers to the necessity of settlement.[58]

54 Ibid., 13.

55 Ibid., 15.

56 Ibid., 16.

57 Ibid., 18.

58 Ibid., 21.

A Scottish member who declared himself qualified to speak on the subject of Union, Mr. Kidd said that the current Union of England and Ireland was unlike the Scottish - English Union and it had failed because it was not national and had been passed by an unrepresentative Parliament.[59] The new arrangement was a different matter altogether, and this agreement should be approved by the Irish, Mr. Barnes thought. It bore the signatures of trusted representatives of their united nation, it was not a British party treaty and it more than met the aspirations of Irish parliamentarians of the old days.[60]

Prime Minister Lloyd George, chief architect of the treaty gave the longest speech in Commons on its behalf and the fullest explanations of its articles. Dominion status for Ireland, he began, meant that what-ever measure of freedom, Dominion status given to Canada, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa, that would be extended to Ireland. There would be a guarantee that whenever there was an attempt at encroaching upon the rights of Ireland, every dominion would begin to feel that its own position was put in jeopardy.[61] It meant that the Irish would have complete con-

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59 Ibid., 99.

60 Ibid., 15.

61 Ibid., 28.

trol over their own affairs without any interference from any other part of the Empire. It meant that Ireland would share the rights of the Empire, and the responsibilities of Empire as well.[62]

The Irish had acceded to the essential security demands of Great Britain and in view of this, she was given the right to a certain number of armed men who were to guarantee law and order and the right to impose tariffs on British goods.[63] They had completely accepted allegiance to the British Crown, membership in the Empire and common citizenship.[64] In the best interests of themselves, the Protestant minority in the South and the British Empire, the Ulsterites should join with the rest of Ireland. If they did not, there would be a re-adjustment of the northern boundary of the Irish Free State based upon the recommendation of a Boundary Commission who were to fix the boundary according to the wishes of the inhabitants in the Northeast of Ireland with certain economic and geographic factors taken into consideration.[65]

Commons was being asked to give approval to the agreement signed by the British and Irish negotiators.

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62 Ibid., 29.

63 Ibid., 38. A protective tariff would protect infant Irish industries from competition with British products

64 Ibid., 33.

65 Ibidl, 39-41

A bill would have to be introduced in another session to ratify the arrangement on Ireland and to give it statuatory effect. Unless the wisdom of entering into such an Agreement were seriously challenged, he felt it would only be awaste of time to enter into a defense of it.[66]

As soon as the Prime Minister had finished, the attack on the Articles of Agreement began. Captain Craig, the leader of the Covenanter's C ampaign in Ulster in 1912,[67] objected to the Oath proposed in the treaty. He called it "the most extraordinary rigamarole and conglomeration I have ever read -- a legalization of treason under certain conditons."[68] The method of arriving at the treaty was deemed worthy of censure by Sir Cecil,[69] and a great to-do was made over the dissimilarity between the Articles of Agreement and the offer made by the Government to Sinn Fein in July, by another M. P.,

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66 Ibid., 47. While insisting that the agreement was "not a surrender to rebellion", Lloyd George noted that "this House owes its greatest rights and privileges to concessions made to successful rebels. (But) the most ruthless repression of any Irish insurrection was affected the greatest English rebel, on behalf of a rebel government to crush the Irish who had rallied to their legitimate sovereign".

67 Cf. Supra, 6.

68 Ibid., 50.

69 Ibid., 60.

Colonel Archer-Shee.[70]

Mr. Lynn insisted that the Prime Minister was such an acrobat that "you do not know exactly where he is and you feel that when he has made a speech if you reply to it, he has probably changed his opinion before you have spoken yours."[71] For Commons to have to accept or reject the Articles (Lloyd George has asked that no amendment to be proposed) without alteration was "a grave constitutional infringement."[72]

The treaty might achieve the breaking-up of the British Empire, Sir J. Davison feared.[73] Colonel Gretton warned that the dominion status included the right to secede.[74] The dominion machinery of foreign affairs depended on the good will of dominion ministers and what prospect of good will of dominion ministers and what prospect of good will was there in Ireland while a large minority was not satisfied and until the mass of Irish people conceived the moral duties of the citizen -- until, at any rate, they had scruples about murder, was the admonition of Cecil.[75]

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70 Ibid., 78-80. Cf. supra., 37.

71 Ibid., 163.

72 Ibid., 92.

73 Ibid., 103.

74 Ibid., 151.

75 Ibid., 67.

Since the Irish Declaration dated January, 1919 had never been repudiated, Colonel Gretton believed that Ireland had every intention of seceding from the Empire. Since such a step would bring about a new struggle in Ireland as soon as the British troops were withdrawn and a new provisional Government set up,[76] he suggested that a clause be added to the vote of thanks to the King, telling the regret of the House of Commons that the Articles of Agreement involved the surrender of the right of the Crown in Ireland, gave power to establish an independent Army and Navy, violated the pledges given to Ulster and failed to safeguard the rights of the Loyalist population of Southern Ireland.[77]

The motion was seconded by Stephen Gwynn who wondered whether there were anything more indecent than the photograph of the Members of the Government and laughing over the terms of the Agreement,[78] which involved the surrender of part of the British Empire. Were they laughing at the thought of the widows and orphans?

The remainder of the attack was by Ulstermen like Mr. W. Coote who objected to this "Picking at our areas and institutions."[79] They failed to see why "the loyal,

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76 Ibid., 152.

77 Ibid., 163.

78 Ibid., 156.

79 Ibid., (December 16, 1921), 222.

progressive and Protestant six counties of the North" should accept the domination of the "disloyal, ignorant and Roman Catholic majority of the S outh."[80] Catholicism, in general, was a thing to be respected: but the Irish branch of it was peculiarly distasteful. Rear Admiral Adair pointed out the difference between the two:

> I have no disrespect whatever for Roman Catholics such as, for example, the Viceroy of Ireland and the Members of this House; but the Roman Catholicism of Maynooth is a different thing altogether.[81]

The final plea for acceptance of the Treaty was made by Members of the Government with the assistance of some of the leading Members of the Opposition. Their speeches but re-echoed what Lloyd George had said: the Treaty was not a surrender; Ireland would not be independent; and here was a chance for Britain to take the lead in the world of nations as a peacemaker.[82] Winston Churchill felt that the British could have succeeded by force, but that a better way lay open. In the Treaty, British rights in Ireland were safeguarded by the clauses on Empire, allegiance, the Navy, and Ulster appearing in the Articles of Agreement.[83] Another of the British Conference

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80 Ibid., (December 16,1921) 112.

81 Ibid.

82 Ibid., 315-330.

83 Ibid., 174.

delegates, Sir Laming Worthington-Evans, insisted that Ireland would have to remain a state within the Empire: she could not within the ever terms of the oath of allegiance, set up a republic and still retain her constitution written in terms of the first and second clauses of the Articles of Agreement.[84]

Bonar Law, former leader of the Opposition, said that never before had England had the moral support of the South of Ireland. Perhaps, the Irish Government would get it, and restore civilized conduct there.[85] Sir Robert Woods, speaking on behalf of the Unionists in Southern Ireland welcomed the treaty. His group felt that through its instrumentality, Ireland had an opportunity to pursue the paths of people and progress.[86]

Stanley Baldwin, Chairman of the Board of Trade, said he he had voted for a conference with Ireland; "Considering the Washington Conference, commitments on the Pacific, World War sufferings, and (the fact that) our influence is essential to any move forward in the League of Nations."[87] Considering the stand that England was taking before the world, he considered his country "big enough"; that before embarking on further bloodshed within her boundaries, she should make on last effort for peace.

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84 Ibid., 149.

85 Ibid., 209.

86 Ibid., 216-217.

87 Ibid., 122.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain, another delegate to the conference, closed the case for the Government.[88] He believed that the view of the House of Commons should be expressed before the opinion of the Dail on the Articles of Agreement was ascertained. Parliament should turn its back on the past, exercise its imperial perogative to forgive and look to a brighter, more hopeful future.[89] The debate ended on this note of hope.

The amendment offered by Stephen Gwynn, criticising the conference and the treaty was defeated. The main question was put through and decided in the affirmative four hundred and one to fifty-eight.[90]

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88 Ibid., 123.

89 Ibid., 259.

90 Ibid., 263.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

While the Articles of Agreement were accepted by the Parliament by an almost overwhelming majority, in Ireland they were greeted with heated opposition and secured the approval of the Dail Eireann only after a fierce debate and then by a scant seven-vote majority.[1] As soon as the delegates had arrived home in Dublin, President De Valera had called a Cabinet meeting "to consider the circumstances under which the Plenipotentiaries had signed the agreement in London."[2] A vote was taken on the acceptability of the document and a division in the Cabinet appeared. Griffith, Collins and Barton refused to denounce the agreement they had signed and they were joined by William Cosgrave who, in September, 1922, was to become President of the Dail; De Valera rejected it and was joined by the Ministers of Home Affairs (Cathal Brugha) and Defense (Austen Stack). In summoning an open meeting of the Dail for the next Wednesday, he hoped that the people of the country would refuse to accept this Treaty

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1 Mac Ardle, Irish Republic, 641.

2 Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, 330.

which he, as President, could not recommend to them.[3]

As the Dail opened on December fifteenth, De Valera began a fierce criticism of the delegates who, he said, had broken an understanding with him that "the complete text of the draft treaty to be signed would be submitted to him before signing."[4] Griffith ignored the charge, and declared that the delegates had brought back a treaty of equality. They had brought back the flag as well, an Irish Army and the evacuation of Irish soil for the first time in seven hundred years. The Oath was one an Irishman could take with honor. Ireland was offered everything but the name of a Republic. In face of that if anyone said that he would fight, Griffith would reply, "You are fools. I will fall out of the ranks. I take no further responsibility."[5]

After a one hour discussion, the Dail resolved itself into a secret session which lasted for four days.[6] During this time, De Valera offered an alternative to the Treaty -- Document Number Two. Document Number Two was found to be in most clauses almost identical with the Treaty, and it

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3 Ibid., 332.

4 Manchester Guardian, December 15, 1921, 9. The Guardian noted that the credentials of the delegates had given them full powers to conclude a treaty.

5 Manchester Guardian, December 20, 1921, 7.

6 Manchester Guardian, December 15, 1921, 9.

disposed of the pretense that De Valera opposed the Treaty solely because it failed to secure recognition of the Irish Republic. In it, he formally accepted almost all the provisions around which the subsequent campaign against the signatories was conducted.[7] One apparently vital difference between Document Number Two and the Treaty was the constant use of the term "Ireland" instead of "Irish Free State" in the latter, which de facto excluded the six counties of north-east Ulster. However the last seven clauses recognized the Northern Parliament if Ulster did not agree to amalgamate with the rest of the country.[8]

When the Dail resumed open sessions on December twentieth, Michael Collins defended signing the Treaty without reference to Dublin, on the grounds that Lloyd George had to give a reply to Sir James Craig that day and there was no time to refer them back to Dublin. He said, however, that he would have signed whether he went back to Dublin or not.[9]

Gavan Duffy, on the other hand, said that he was going to recommend the Treaty reluctantly, but sincerely, because he saw no alternative. It did give the Irish people

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7 Pierce Beasley, Michael Collins and the Making of a New Ireland, II, Dublin, 1926,323; Denis Gwynn, De Valera, New York, 1933, 154.

8 Gwynn, De Valera , 157.

9 Manchester Guardian, December 22, 1921,9.

what they had not had for seven hundred years; it put the power of Government and the military power in the hands of the people and they would be in a far better position to resist aggression and maintain and increase that power than they were before.[10] He mentioned an editorial in the Morning Post which scornfully described England as "waiting for an answer at the doorstep of an illegal assembly, the self-styled Dail Eireann."[11] Another delegate, Edmund Duggan, said he signed the agreement with the fullest consciousness of his responsibility to the terms, to the country, to the living and to the dead.[12]

On the motion of Michael Collins, the Dail adjourned on December twenty-second, to reassemble on January third. In the interim, the campaign in favor of acceptance of the Treaty made headway. Both sides had agreed that there should be no speech-making and the effect of this was that while authoritative and reasoned opinion against the Treaty was silenced, the crude and sensational aspect of the situation was freely exploited by the Press. Such headlines as "Ratification or Ruin", "Rejection and Chaos" displayed without cessation

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10 Ibid.

11 Morning Post, December 20, 1921, 5.

12 Manchester Guardian, December 22, 1921,4.

and without scruple, had their effect on a people already over-strained.[13]

The section of the population which had been against the whole struggle for independence became active and fairly influential. Small miscellaneous groups which assembled to pass resolutions in favor of the Treaty were reported by the Press as "important representative gatherings."[14] Public bodies which showed a majority for acceptance were reported as favoring it "unanimously".[15] Letters supporting the Treaty were fully published and much space was devoted to a pamphlet by Professor O'Rahilly who maintained that "the right of secession is inherent in recognized Dominion Status" and that "national extinction" was the alternative to "hopeful compromise." All warnings against the Treaty, all caution as to the dangers latent in it, all opposition to Partition, even, seemed flung to the winds.[16] Every effort of the Press was concentrated on stampeding the people towards peace at any price, and the Churches supported the Press. The Most Reverend Dr.Fogarty, preaching the Christmas sermon at Ennis Cathedral said, "Let

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13 Mac Ardle, Irish Republic, 623.

14 A study of the notices about these endorsements shows that just as the sensational American papers treated the Easter Week executions, the endorsements were reported individually, each one being given a separate box and headline.

15 Frank Fahy, Debates on the Treaty (January 3, 1922), 196.

16 Mac Ardle, Irish Republic, 624.

the people have no mistake about it; the rejection of this Treaty must lead inevitably to war of such a destructive character as would lay Ireland out dead in a very short time."[17]

The debate on the Treaty lasted five days. By the seventh of January, supporters of the Treaty consisted of a close party within the Dail and no effort to effectively preserve the Republican position and to secure better terms received any cooperation from them. Although they admitted that only the threat of war could induce them to approve the Treaty, nevertheless, once having committed themselves to accepting it, they exaggerated its benefits, and refused to look for any defects there might be in it. Loyalty to Griffith and "Mike" Collins, moreover, led their adherents to insist that no better terms than those which these men had signed could possibly have been obtained. Efforts to discredit De Valera's counter-proposals led to an effort to discredit his leadership in every way and attacks upon him were made of the most far-fetched and irrelevant nature.[18]

During the course of the debates, the public knew nothing of the provisions of "Document Number Two" which had been first sketched by De Valera during the secret

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17 Irish Independent, December 28, 1921, 7.

18 Mac Ardle, Irish Republic, 635.

session of the Dail, but they heard it constantly referred to in hostile and misleading terms. His completed draft was, in fact, an elaboration of the External Association proposals on which Griffith, Collins and the entire Cabinet of the Dail had agreed to negotiate. His intention was to present it as an amendment to the motion approving the Treaty, but the plan was frustrated on a technicality.[19] On January sixth, De Valera offered his resignation to the Dail. If the Dail re-elected him and rejected the Treaty, and the British then refused the offer which he would make to them, "then we will as in the past, stick to the Sinn Fein Constitution." Because of the protests of anti-Treaty leaders at his resignation at this juncture, De Valera consented to withdraw his resignation, and secured a promise from Griffith that the division on the motion should be taken within twenty-four hours.[20]

The vote was taken on the seventh and one hundred twenty-two Deputies answered the Roll. By a majority of seven Dail Eireann recommended the people of Ireland to surrender the Republic proclaimed in 1916, reaffirmed by a freely-elected assembly in 1919 and defended with immeasurable effort and

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19 Ibid., 637.

20 Ibid., 638-639.

sacrifice.[21] Two days later De Valera resigned and the motion for his re-election was defeated sixty to fifty-eight. Arthur Griffith was elected to succeed him and become President of the Dail.[22]

The Treaty ratified by the Parliaments of England and Ireland, it but remained for it to be enacted into law by the passage of the Free State Agreement Bill through Parliament. This bill was presented by Lloyd George on February 9, 1922 and supported by all the Members of the Conference who were also Members of the House of Commons.[23] During the debate which followed that second reading a week later, Neville Chamberlain made a speech which pretty well summed up the general opinion on the Bill. Chamberlain said that he was not going to be exasperated by outrages into changing his opinion as to the proper course to pursue. He would give all the powers that were necessary to enable the Provisional Government of Ireland to establish itself securely and carry out its proper obligations. That way was the only way of preventing a Civil War in Ireland.[24]

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21 Ibid., 641.

22 Ibid., 644.

23 Parliamentary Debates, Commons CL,(February 9,1922),311.

24 Ibid., (February 16, 1922) 1308.

The majority of Members of the House of Commons supporting the Free State Agreement Act was overwhelming -- three hundred two to sixty, but,as Churchill noted, "the majority were miserable and the minority furious. It took a month to pass."[25] During that time an amendment proposing a military ratio between the Irish Free State and Great Britain[26] was defeated as well as an attempt to delay the third reading of the Bill for six months.[27]

During the debate in Lords, Viscount Peel argued that if the Agreement had been approved in December, four to one, why not now the Bill? It might be to the advantage of Ireland if, in the years to come she were no longer able to attribute her shortcomings in her own country from whatever cause they arose to the excessive stupidity of successive British Governments; if she could no longer "lean upon the mighty arm of England"[28]but had to rely on her own sons' manliness and strength.

As usual, Lord Edward Carson launched into a tirade on the outrages committed by a few in the South and West

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25 Churchill, The Aftermath, 320.

26 Debates , Commons CLI, (March 8, 1922) 1335.

27 Ibid., 1367, 1432.

28 Lords IL, (March 9, 1922) 408.

of Ireland and of that section's constant "trampling on the Union Jack and belittling your Empire,"[29] and proclaiming its "hostility to and hatred of this country and of everybody who cares for it."[30] If the people of the South and West really meant to come forward and to take its place within the Dominions of the Crown as loyal and faithful subjects" as the Prime Minister said they would be welcome in every corner of Ulster, he promised.[31]

After it passed the second reading of the House of Lords, the Bill was committed to a Committee of the whole House.[32] On this occasion, Birkenhead made a speech which pretty well summed up what the British felt they had gaine d by making the Agreement with Ireland.

He said that whatever trials and difficulties lay ahead, whatever demands might be made upon "Britain's impoverished resources"[34] they might address themselves to the tasks with a moral burden immensely alleviated, and a knowledge that the whole world -- the United States of

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29 Ibid., (March 16, 1922) 582.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid., 583.

32 Ibid., 624.

33 Ibid., (March 27, 1922), 912.

34 Ibid., 911.

America and their own Dominions in particular -- would say that Great Britain had done all that the most ardent friend of Ireland could have expected, and that the Irish Government which refused this offer, "Quem Deus vult perdere prius dementat.

According to this closing word on the subject of the Irish Conference and Treaty, Lord Birkenhead, second in command of the British negotiating team and Member of the Cabinet, England accepted the settlement as the decent thing to do for Ireland, and as the only thing that would bring back world recognition of England as a leader for peace and democracy. Did Great Britain merely accept the Treaty as something that must be taken although it was a bit distasteful, or did her Government feel that in the long run it would be of benefit not only to Ireland but to Britain herself and her possessions? Should this small portion of British history be referred to as "The Enlightened Solution of the Irish Question" or was it what an article which had appeared in the National Review in July, 1922 termed it: "The Irish Treason and Its Authors"?[35] In the course of the past thirty-four years since its ratification, who has benefitted more from the Treaty -- England or Ireland?

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35 "The Irish Treason and Its Authors", National Review, LXXXIX, July, 1922, 688-705.

A discussion of the first question, why did Great Britain ratify the Articles of Agreement, must necessarily bring up a second question -- why did Great Britain change her Irish policy from iron-hand rule by the military to a cordial invitation to Ireland to come into the British Empire as a Dominion? In his speech of November twenty-eighth, Birkenhead had explained that time had shown that a policy of coercion in Ireland had failed and it was necessary to seek another solution to the Irish problem. In seeking a solution the Government had in mind the evidence from the British press of the growing public disgust and indignation over the policy of authorized reprisals by the British military in Ireland, and the memorandum from General Macready on the fearfully bad morale among the officers and troops in Ireland. They also had the latter's word that unless Irish difficulties were settled by force of arms or some other means by the fall of 1921, practically all the men under him would have to be replaced. Out and out war was out of the question, as England, facing an unemployment crisis and a wave of crippling strikes could not afford it. Lloyd George decided to hold out his hand in peace and friendship -- once he had ascertained that the Irish were willing to accept something less than a republic.

In April and May of 1921 several unofficial representatives of the Prime Minister approached De Valera and found

him quite willing to discuss a settlement. The British had decided finally to treat with the Sinn Fein Government because it was convinced that it was the only truly representative government in the South and West of Ireland. The means of conducting negotiations that Lloyd George preferred, and which he had attempted after the 1916 Rebellion, were personal conversations and he offered this first to De Valera on June 24, 1921. The invitation followed immediately upon the King's Speech at the opening of the Northern Irish Parliament in Belfast in which His Majesty had appealed to Irishmen of the North and South to forgive and forget and to work together to give Ireland a new era of peace and contentment and good will. The invitation gave no preliminary conditions; it stated that a similar one had been sent to Sir James Craig in Belfast.

Craig had refused his invitation; De Valera accepted and before coming to London conferred with the Unionist leaders in the South of Ireland. The outcome of the Dublin meeting was a truce in Ireland for the duration of the peace discussion and acceptance of De Valera by British editors as the representative of men of all shades of Irish opinion. In London, after a week of discussion, Lloyd George gave De Valera the proposals of July twentieth, which were, in essence, a limited dominion status offer for Ireland. De Valera had, at first, refused to take the offer back to Ireland for submission to the Dail Cabinet. He reconsidered, and agreed to submit a

formal reply to them. The offer was rejected three weeks later and nearly two months of letter-writing followed between the two statesmen in an attempt to find an agreement. Finally, agreed with the Prime Minister that a solution could best be found by "personal discussion"[36] and ha agreed to send representatives to London to find a solution as to "how the association of Ireland with the community of nations known as the British Empire could best be reconciled with Irish national aspirations."[37]

The Conference had begun on October eleventh and for two weeks it met as a full assembly. During that time, five points of difficulties appeared: sovereignty of Ireland, allegiance to the Crown, Irish defense and finance, and Ulster. Should negotiations break down, the Irish hoped that it would be over the matter of Ulster; the British were determined that it should be the result of Ireland's claiming to be sovereign and refusing allegiance to the King, a thing that would instinctively kill any support the Irish case might have from British citizens. At the end of the period, Lloyd George was disgusted with the turn of events. He had told Lord Riddell that the Irish refused to come to conclusions.

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36 Lloyd George to De Valera, September 29, 1921.

37 De Valera to Lloyd George, September 30, 1921.

After October twenty-fourth, the delegates split up and most of the business was negotiated between the Prime Minister, Birkenhead, Griffith and Collins, according to the type of discussion most favored by Lloyd George -- personal conversations.

On October thirty-first, Parliament had given its sanction to the talks between the Government and the Sinn Fein representatives and Lloyd George was confident that he had a united people behind him. Thus assured, he was determined that there should be peace -- a peace that Great Britain could honorably accept. With a promise that he would work to destroy the opposition of Ulster, he persuaded Arthur Griffith to agree not to quit the Conference on the point of the Ulster settlement, if all other arrangements were satisfactory. Griffith would not suggest the idea of a boundary commission to delimit areas of Northern and Southern Ireland should Ulster refuse to come in with the rest of Ireland, but he said that he would not oppose the idea should the Prime Minister make it. Lloyd George did try by conferences with Sir James Craig and by appeals to the leaders of the Unionist Party to persuade the Ulstermen to accept the agreement that Southern Ireland would accept. In this he failed, but he had not failed in the Conference, since Griffith had promised not to break off negotiations over Ulster. British strategy had succeeded and the Irish delegates felt bound

to accept the Treaty when December sixth came.

Three weeks before the signing of the Articles of Agreement, Lloyd George had begun his speeches on the necessity of peace in Ireland for the stability of the Empire and ultimately of the world. The Press had enthusiastically taken up his appeal. Ulster was told that she had no constitutional right to refuse the outline of settlement that public opinion had ordained; the Government was told that it would be criminal foolhardiness to launch a needless war in Ireland should the Conference fail, and a good segment of the British population would oppose it. It is significant, however, that these editorials and letters to the editor mentioned the necessity of Ireland's staying within the Empire and paying allegiance to the King and her agreeing to give Britain the defense facilities she required; nothing else was demanded of her. Ulster was urged by most of the papers to join with the South of Ireland for the sake of peace and her own prosperity and good sense.

Probably Lord Asquith most accurately summed up the significance of the Irish Treaty, and its worth to Great Britain in 1921. He said it was a good thing for England: positively, because it brought an end to the strife that the British people were sick of; and negatively, because it did not surrender anything essential -- Ireland was still within the Empire and owing allegiance to the King.

Although supporters of the document went to great lengths to show how it would remove the one cause of Anglo-American hostility, it cannot be proved that this automatically ended all differences of opinion between the two countries. It must be admitted, however, that Anglo- American relations have never been better than in the last quarter-century.

At the time, the Treaty was a very good thing for England; something that perhaps could not have been avoided but something with much in its favor. In the long run, it did the task of bringing about new relations between Britain and the Commonwealth -- much looser relationships. Ireland within the powers given her by the Treaty operated as a free nation. She interpreted the powers given her and the obligations placed upon her by the Treaty very loosely. This interpretation of dominion status was estended to the other Members of the Commonwealth by law in the Statute of Westminister in 1928. Not content with this relationship, the Irish Free State began a policy of systematically overlooking the obligations placed on her by the Treaty, and by 1937 claimed the right not only to be supreme in domestic affairs, but to send out her own representatives to foreign nations. She adopted a new Constitution enumerating these "rights". Finally, in April, 1949, she officially declared herself a Republic without a word of protest from Great Britain. This Irish

policy of passive resistance and self-development was imitated by India and undoubtedly played a significant role in her attainment of independence. Fear that other dependencies may also follow the lead of Ireland has subsequently troubled the British. All that Ireland has suffered from the terms of the Treaty is its incorporation of partition which has crippled Ireland economically, and until this year prevented her from participating in the United Nations Organization. Partition still looms as a cause of a second Civil War in Ireland more cruel and more vicious than the one which immediately followed the inauguration of the Provisional Government in Ireland in 1922, and which the Treaty opponents had accurately predicted.

Supporters of the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 had pointed to it as a means of forwarding the cause of international peace, and of improving Anglo-Irish and Anglo-American relations. Its opponents had predicted it would bring about a terrible Civil War in Ireland and would eventually lose Ireland to the British Empire. Both sides were correct. The Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921 did succeed in securing its immediate aims -- peace in Ireland, inclusion of Ireland within the Empire, removal of a long-standing difficulty from the sphere of Anglo-American relations, and recognition of Great Britain by the world as a champion of small nations and their self-determination. As predicted, it brought a

terrible and fratricidal Civil War to Ireland and permanently partitioned the country in an artificial manner. Through the years it has benefitted Ireland immensely, in that from this basis she went on to secure, as Johann Smuts told De Valera that she would, complete independence for the twenty-six southern counties. It has revamped the entire picture of dominion status and relationships within the Commonwealth. Where it was supposed to strengthen the Empire, it weakened it considerably and dangerously. The partition clauses still have their ill effect on Anglo-American relationships, since almost every session of Congress brings forth some kind of a resolution in favor of the recognition of the independence of all thirty-two counties from England. Most significant of all, its solution of the Irish Question turned out to be the complete severance of Ireland from Great Britain.

A CRITICAL ESSAY ON AUTHORITIES

I. Sources

A. Government Documents; Official Records

No official report of the Conference proceedings has been published as was the *Report of the Proceedings of the Irish Convention*, Dublin, H.M. Stationery Office, 1918. However the correspondence between Lloyd George and De Valera which preceded the meeting appeared as *Correspondence Relating to the Proposals of His Majesty's Government for an Irish Settlement*, Cmd. 1539 of 1921, and in part along with the text of the proposals given De Valera on July twentieth and the *Articles of Agreement* themselves in the *State Papers, British and Foreign*, CXIV, 1921, London, 1924. Discussion of Irish self-determination by our Congress may be found in the U.S. Government Printing Office publication *Hearing Before the Committee on Foreign Affairs, House of Representatives on H.R.B. 404, December 12-13, 1919*. Both Great Britain and Ireland have published the debates on the treaty ratification as part of the official report of the proceedings of their Parliament -- Britain's being the *Parliamentary Debates, Fifth Series* and that of Ireland, Dail Eireann, *Debates on the Treaty Between Great Britain and Ireland*, December, 1921 and January, 1922.

B. Collections of Documents

The American Association for International Conciliation, Greenwich, Connecticut, published two pamphlets on the negotiations in 1921 and 1922 which contained all of the De Valera-Lloyd George correspondence preceding the Conference, a long letter from General Johann Smuts to De Valera and the correspondence between the Prime Minister and Sir James Craig written just after the Articles of Agreement were signed. A more inclusive collection is Edmund Curtis and R.B. Mc Dowell, editors, Irish Historical Documents, 1172-1922, London, 1953, which contains documents on the Feinians, Sinn Fein and the Easter Rising. The international aspects of the latter may be found in George H. Knott, editor, Trial of Sir Roger Casement, London, 1917 and Basil Duke Henning, Archibald Foord and Barbara Matthias, Crises in English History, 1066-1921, New York, 1949. An eight hundred page documented account of the period of guerrilla warfare is American Committe on Conditions in Ir land, Evidence on Conditions in Ireland, Washington, 1921.

C. Writings by Eye-witnesses

1. Speeches

The speeches of Frederick Edwin Smith-Brooks, Lord Birkenhead, published in London in 1929 give a valuable insight into the Government's attitude before June, 1921. David Lloyd George, Slings and Arrows, edited by Philip Guedella, New York,

1929, is comprised of quotations from the British statesman from the commencement of his public life, arranged topically under the headings "Democracy", "Nationalism", "Peace", etc.

2. Books

Much of the literature published on the 1916 Rebellion is very biased and intended to be merely propaganda. Among the more authentic accounts of the Easter Rising are Dublin's Fighting Story -- Told by the Men Who Made It, Tralee, 1947; Maurice Joy, editor, The Irish Rebellion and Its Martyrs, New York, 1916, which contains several essays by Padric an d Mary Colum; and Louis J. Redmond-Howard, Six Days of the Irish Republic, London, 1916. The period of martial law in Ireland and the resultant guerrilla attacks has been told by both British officers and Irish fighters. Among the most helpful are: Frank Perry Crozier, Ireland for Ever, London, 1932; the Right Honorable Sir Nevil Macready, Annals of an Active Life, London, 1924; and Dan Breen, My Fight for Irish Freedom, Dublin, 1924; Batt O'Connor, With Michael Collins in the Fight for Irish Freedom, Dublin, 1925. The American aspect of the independence movement from 1916 to 1921 has been thoroughly described by the Sinn Fein Envoy to the United States, Dr. Patrick Mac Cartan, With De Valera in America, New York, Dublin, 1932.

In lieu of an official record of the proceedings, Frank Pakenham, Peace by Ordeal, Account of the Signing of the Treaty between Great Britain and Ireland, 1921, Based on First-hand Sources is invaluable. Published in London, 1935, its author was at the time doing research at Oxford. Since then he has served in the Cabinet as Secretary of State for War, head of the Civil Aviation Board and currently as Lord of the Admiralty. Peace by Ordeal was recommended to by the Irish Consul in Chicago, Mr.Sean Ronan, as the best work on the Conference and Treaty and was referred to by Mr. Eamon De Valera in a personal letter I received from him in March, 1956,as an accurate report . Mr. De Valera had been unable to write me in detail about his attitude at various stages of the conference but he stated that he had often done this before and suggested that I refer to the statements attributed to him in Peace by Ordeal and The Irish Republic, Dublin, 1951, by Dorothy Mac Ardle.[1]

Works by members of the British delegation contain some references to the Conference, but they are quite brief. They include: Austen Chamberlain, Down the Years , London, 1935; Winston Churchill, The World Crisis: The Aftermath, Volume Five, London, 1927; and Lloyd George, Is It Peace? London, 1923.

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1 Cf. infra, 154 .

Others less directly connected with the Conference have left longer and more detailed descriptions of the role they played in achieving the solution arrived at. Tom Jones, Lloyd George, Cambridge, 1951, is extremely valuable in that its author, besides being the official secretary to the British delegation at the Conference, was a close personal friend of the Prime Minister. Lord Riddell's Diary of the Peace Conference and Afterwards, 1918-1923, London, 1933, with its companion piece, Lord Riddell's War Diary, London, 1933, together offer a significant insight into Lloyd George's personal and unofficial opinipns through the years and show how much he felt Irish Nationalism could justly demand and how he felt it could best be satisfied. Herbert, Lord of Oxford and Asquith, Memories and Reflections, Two Volumes, Boston, 1928, reflects moderate and Liberal Party opinion on the Irish situation. Works are available on the three shades of Unionist opinion -- English, Ulster and Southern Irish . Salvidge of Liverpool, Behind the Political Scene , 1890-1926, London, 1934, reveals the attempts of the Government to win approval of the Conference from the Unionist Party at their Liverpool Conference. Ronald John Mac Neill, Ulster's Stand for Union, London, 1922, shows how the Liverpool meeting failed to convince other Unionists --the Ulstermen. The more amenable Unionists, those of Southern Ireland had their

spokesman in William St.John Broderick, first Earl of Midleton , Records and Reactions, London, 1937.

3.Pamphlets

Tracts for Our Times were a series of pamphlets by Separatists which appeared in the year preceding the Easter Rising. The following show the varying attitudes of Volunteer leaders on what should be Ireland's political ideal: #2 Owen Mac Neill, Should Ireland Be Divided?

#3 The O'Rahilly, A Secret History of the Irish Volunteers

#4 Arthur Griffith, When the Government Publishes Sedition

#10 Patrick Pearse, Spiritual Nation

#11 ..... Ghosts

#12 ..... The Separatist Idea

#13 ..... The Sovereign People

John Redmond, The Voice of Ireland, London, New York, 1916, was a condemnation of the Easter Week rebels and a last-ditch stand of parliamentarianism. George William Russell (AE), Ireland and the Empire at the Court of Conscience London, 1921, was a cut and dried outline of mutual obligations and alternatives.

4. Newspapers

A day-to-day study of the London Times and the Manchester Guardian offers abundant material on public opinion

towards Ireland. In their articles, editorials and letters - to-the-editor the two papers expressed quite similar viewpoints. The Guardian devoted more space to Irish matters and its political correspondent, "Politicus" appears to have had an amazing knowledge of what went on at the Conference sessions and at Government headquarters in Dublin and London. The London Morning Post is useful only as an example of extreme conservative opinion; the Daily Mail as an example of the attitude of the "rags." The New York Times discussed the Irish situation through the years from 1916 to 1922 quite adequately but with much reserve. The Irish Independent was used in its editions of 1921 and 1922 for the accounts of reaction in Ireland to the Dail Treaty debates and in its 1953 edition for a series of articles by Pierce Beasley on the "Irish Fight for Freedom."

5. Magazines

The Irish Review, quite a literary magazine for being the official organ of the Irish Volunteers, is indispensable for its discussion of various shades of Irish political opinion in the years 1913 and 1914. The June, 1953 issue of Eire, the bulletin of the Irish Department of External Affairs, was an excellent commemorative issue on Sir Roger Casement.

During the period of the Conference, the British periodicals ran a surprisingly few number of articles on the

subject. The Contemporary Review and the Fortnightly as well as the National Review were extremely anti-Irish in their discussions. The Nation and Athenaeum was definitely more favorable to Ireland. Throughout the period of the Conference Punch published priceless cartoons, extremely witty accounts of reverberations in Parliament in the column, "The Essence of Parliament". The Illustrated News stated the facts and pictured them well, but without much comment.

In the early months of 1921, both Month, the Jesuit monthly and Pilgrim, an Aglican publication, were drawing attention to the brutality and futility of British reprisals in Ireland in numerous editorials. They kept up the demand for peace as did the British Weekly, a Journal of Christian and Social Progress and the Catholic Tablet. Early in the next year, 1922, Landmark and the Empire Review, Journal of British Trade, in their editorials praised the Treaty as a step forward in the improvement of British, Dominion and international foreign relations.

II. Secondary Works

The definitive work on this period of Irish history is Dorothy Mac Ardle, The Irish Republic, 1951, a readable well-documented, well-indexed, thousand page account with an eighty page appendix of statements and documents. The earlier phases of the Anglo-Irish Conflict are treated in Norman Dunbar Palmer, The Land Crisis, New Haven, 1940;

Desmond Ryan, The Phoenix Flame (the story of John Devoy and Feinianism in America), London, 1937; and John J. Horgan, From Parnell to Pearse, Dublin, 1949. The Sinn Fein Movement and the Easter Rising are accurately discussed in detail in Francis Jones, History of the Sinn Fein Movement and the Irish Rebellion, New York, 1916; P.S. O'Hegarty, Victory of Sinn Fein, Dublin, 1924, and Desmond Ryan, The Rising, Dublin, 1949.

Twentieth-century politics in Britain have been deeply affected by their stand on Ireland. Books found most helpful in this regard were: Emily Allyn, Lords versus Commons: a Century of Conflict and Compromise, 1830-1930, New York, London, 1931; George D.H. Cole, History of the British Labor Party from 1915, London, 1948, and Herbert Tracey, The British Labor Party: Its Growth, Policy and Leaders, London, 1939. How one party, the Unionists, forced partition in Ireland is clearly outlined in Denis Gwynn, The History of Partition, 1912-1925, Dublin, 1950.

Not only have the Irish delegates to the Conference failed to leave a written record of their work, their biographers are few and far between. Michael Collins and the Making of a New Ireland, II, by Pierce Beasley, Dublin, 1924, is very good but there is no comparable work on the other delegates. Biographers of De Valera tend to be very biased. Among the more impartial ones are Denis Gwynn, De Valera, Dublin, 1933,

and Sean O'Faolain, Life Story of Eamon De Valera, Dublin, 1933.

Biographies of the British delegates failed to say much about the Treaty and Conference. Besides the books by Jones, Malcolm Thomson, David Lloyd George, the Official Biography, London, 1948, and John Hugh Edwards, David Lloyd George, Man and Statesman , New York, 1929, add something to our understanding of Lloyd George, his ideas and the way he attempted to carry them out. Of the many biographies on Churchill, on the subject of the Conference Philip Guedella, Winston Churchill, London, 1949, was most helpful for this discussion. Frederick Edward Smith-Brooks, first Earl of Birkenhead, by His Son, Frederick W.E. Smith-Brooks, the second Earl of Birkenhead, Two Volumes ; London, 1933-1935, is very useful since it contains several memoes from the first Lord Birkenhead which reveal the exact position and outlook of the British at each stage of the London Conference.

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by Maureen Patrice Buckley has been read and approved by three members of the Department of History.

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated, and that the thesis is now given final approval with reference to content, form, and mechanical accuracy.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

May 29, 1956
Date

Edward T. Gargan
Signature of Adviser